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ABSTRACT

The Tasmanian (Australia) Office of Youth Affairs and Family conducted consultations concerning issues impacting young people living in rural and isolated areas. Eight workshops specifically for youth were attended by 123 young people. Five community forums were attended by 25-30 participants each. The difficulties of living in isolated situations were acknowledged. Support groups for youth, greater access to emergency services, and more employment opportunities were common solutions offered. Issues concerning life in small communities revolved around lack of infrastructure, gossip, and police and young people. Involving youths in land development projects and public space development was a strategy endorsed by many. The need for confidentiality was mentioned often. Proposed solutions to poor transportation included providing concession cards for young people and expanding the use of school buses and aged-care services buses. All groups agreed on the need for places where young people could meet. Youth festivals, youth facilities, employment of youth workers, and youth involvement in organizing events were suggested. Development of resource booklets and Internet sites was suggested in response to the lack of access to services, information, and support. Responses to educational issues included allotting time in school for doing homework and offering local vocational courses. Strategies for employment and training included mobile outreach services, rural employment officers, job sharing, flexible hours, mentors, and union visits to schools. Developing tourism, local resources, festivals, and beautification projects were suggested to promote rural communities. Seven appendices present issues, guidelines for working with youth, and survey results. (Contains 77 references.) (TD)

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Tasmania's Rural and Isolated Young People
Issues, Solutions and Strategies

Report of a community consultation with young people, government, youth and organisations, in rural and isolated communities

Office of Youth Affairs
Tasmania

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following report provides examples of what can be achieved when local communities come together co-operatively to achieve a specific task.

The enthusiastic contribution made by young people living in rural and isolated areas was evidence of their willingness and exceptional ability to identify the issues impacting on them, develop solutions and resolve the issues identified. Their participation was inspiring and exciting to witness.

The commitment shown and contribution made by secondary schools, colleges, youth and community organisations, representatives from industry, business and training bodies, as well as local government, State Government and Commonwealth Government and concerned community members was greatly appreciated and welcomed.

The consultation project would not have been successful without the willing support of the many participants in the survey process, workshops and forums who provided valuable information and contributions.

Helen Rees was employed to facilitate the Issues Identification Workshops and the Solutions Forums and to prepare reports of their outcomes. Her contribution to the process was crucial.

In addition, the involvement of all those other people who provided guidance, wisdom and co-operation during the project is gratefully acknowledged.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Office of Youth Affairs and Family (OYAF) assists in the co-ordination of youth policy development across State government agencies and facilitates the flow of information about programs, services and issues affecting young people.

Part of this involves consultation with and information provision to service delivery agencies and young people, both on an informal and formal basis, to assist in the development of coherent and consistent State government responses to the contemporary situations of Tasmanian young people. To assist in this process, the Minister responsible for youth affairs agreed to the implementation of a program of issue-based consultations with young people and the youth sector in general.

Three priority issues areas were identified. They were **arts and creativity**, **issues impacting on young people living in rural and isolated areas**, and **youth justice**. This report is the result of the second of these.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

The purpose of this consultation was to seek insight into the issues impacting on young people living in rural and isolated areas for further policy and program development by State government. As well as obtaining vital information from young people, views were obtained from those working with young people, youth and community organisations, the three tiers of government, industry and community members generally.

The specific aims of the consultation were to:

- identify and explore issues impacting on young people in rural and isolated areas;
- identify aspirations of these young people;
- involve young people in decisions that affect them;
- gain knowledge and understanding of the issues for the purpose of policy and program development;
- inform the three tiers of government, youth and community organisations and other bodies about the issues impacting on young people;
- identify the needs of young people in relation to access to services and activities, and develop ways to improve this access, with a particular emphasis on disadvantaged young people;
- provide a final report outlining the process and outcomes; and
- provide feedback on the implementation or adoption of recommendations to young people.

THE CONSULTATION MODEL

OYAF developed a model that allowed maximum participation from a wide range of contributors, taking into account time, travel and location limitations. The model broadly reflected the principles of community development. OYAF acted as a catalyst and set up a process that ensured maximum input from a wide range of perspectives.

OYAF consulted with the following stakeholders:

- young people living in rural and isolated communities;
- other people living in rural and isolated communities;
- youth and community organisations, and service providers working with young people;
- local, State and Commonwealth government youth service providers;
- business, industry and training representative bodies; and
- schools and colleges.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

1. Identifying the Issues

OYAF liaised with government agencies, and youth and community organisations through surveys (Appendix 4) prior to consulting with young people to ensure that the issues addressed in the consultations, and the information gained, would be relevant to agencies' further policy and program development, and service delivery. The results from these surveys are included as Appendices 5 and 6.

Young people were consulted in Issues Identification Workshops to ensure that they had an opportunity to raise their own issues with their own voices, using their own language to describe their situations. The eight workshops were attended by 123 young people.

The information and knowledge gained from the surveys and workshops was synthesised and consolidated into 10 specific issues briefs (Section Three). Generally, the issues and concerns raised were consistent across the board, although there was some variance of issues identified by participants. This appeared to be influenced by the nature of isolation experienced by young people, i.e. whether they had come from one of the islands, or had access to regional centres on a regular basis.

2. Identifying Solutions

Solutions Forums were perceived as an opportunity for communities, including all stakeholders and interest groups, to develop strategies to deal with the issues raised. A wide range of representatives participated including youth and community organisations, health services, drug and alcohol services, Commonwealth and State government agencies, neighbourhood houses, schools and colleges, local councils, housing services and sports organisations. Young people from schools and youth groups, young independent participants, and interested community members attended the forums. The five Solutions Forums were attended by an average of 25–30 participants.

The issues briefs were provided to give direction and focus. Participants had the opportunity to participate in two issues groups of their choice to identify:

- possible solutions;
- the resources and support required;
- who should be involved; and
- what they could do.

A comprehensive outline of possible solutions and strategies (including resources and support required, who should be involved and what they could do or provide) is provided in Section Four of this report. A summary follows.

Isolation

Many of the solutions and themes that were raised regarding the issue of isolation were dealt with through discussions in other issue areas. Generally, forum participants acknowledged the difficulties in living in isolated situations. Support groups for young people, greater access to emergency services and the employment of youth workers were common solutions raised. Participants suggested that greater access to services and the provision of more activities would discourage young people from participating in negative activities such as self harm and drug taking.

Small Communities

As was the case with the issue of isolation, many of the issues raised regarding small communities were dealt with as part of other issues. For example, lack of infrastructure, acceptance of difference, gossip and co-operation between services, police and young people were dealt with as part of the support, service provision and information issue area. Participants recognised that by addressing issues raised together, many of the concerns could be resolved by changing day-to-day practices.

Involving young people in land development projects and public space developments was a strategy endorsed by many groups. Further, young people repeatedly expressed a desire to have more involvement in community decisions and projects.

'Confidentiality' was raised by many. The need for strict protocols, and an assurance that they would be adhered to, was expressed.

Transport

Transport was perceived as a major issue by all groups. Many solutions and strategies were developed to respond to this issue. One of the most popular solutions included dealing with the inequitable costs associated with living in rural and isolated areas through the provision of concession cards for young people. Extending the use of school buses and existing community buses such as aged-care services buses to allow non-students and young people access to regional centres for training, employment and other services was another popular solution.

Limited bus services in isolated areas led to recommendations for private operators to extend operational hours, or to operate on alternate weekends to enable people to access regional centres. Current legislation does not allow for competitive services and it was recommended that changes to legislation in relation to Public Vehicle Licensing be made.

Something To Do and Somewhere To Go

All the groups identified the need for youth specific space for young people to meet, ie a youth centre or café. A very popular suggestion was the provision of skateboard and rollerblade facilities. Specific activities for young people such as youth festivals, youth cafés and the employment of youth workers were other common solutions raised.

All groups recommended that young people play a significant role in the organisation and establishment of events and facilities. A common suggestion was the establishment of a state-wide or regional resource 'library' from which youth and community organisations could borrow equipment instead of making individual submissions to funding sources. It was perceived that this would be a more effective and efficient use of both resources and funding. Other commonly identified resources that could be used more efficiently included school facilities after-hours, local government buildings and unused public housing.

Drugs and Alcohol

At no time throughout the consultation was illegal or legal drug taking condoned. However, recognition that young people do experiment with various substances including illegal and legal drugs was evident within communities. A desire to deal with this issue in a safe, responsible manner was the primary motive of participants in the forums.

The most common solution discussed throughout the forums was the need for accessible, accurate information on the effects and consequences of drug taking. Information requested included how to minimise the harm of drug taking, how to recognise an overdose situation and what to do in the event of one occurring and a list of emergency numbers to contact. A 'dry out' centre for young people and a 24-hour information telephone service were other suggestions. Anti-drug events were also a common suggestion. Events included music festivals with transport provided for the most isolated young people and art exhibitions that reflected an anti-drug message. Peer education was perceived by many as the most effective means of transferring information about drugs to young people. Another solution suggested was a program where young people educated parents about the effects of drugs and strategies to deal with young people who may be taking drugs. It was also suggested that parents should be more responsible about their own use of drugs and alcohol.

Access to Service Provision, Information and Support

Common solutions provided by the forums included the development of a resource booklet/survival handbook that included information on services, resources, funding and support available to young people which is also available on the Internet. Information cards identifying emergency services and support in all regions, and a resource information bag for distance education students and students living in isolated areas were other popular solutions discussed. The use of easily accessible locations such as milk bars, hardware stores, bus shelters and local businesses to locate information about services and resources, was perceived as an effective means of information provision.

The Internet was mentioned often as a valuable resource. The establishment of a 'youth home page' that linked a range of relevant information sites and which was accessible to the Tasmanian youth sector and young people was a very popular solution. The provision of Internet facilities in schools and public spaces such as libraries, police stations, hospitals and local municipal offices was also recommended.

A greater interaction and co-ordination of services was suggested and the establishment of mobile outreach services were also recommended. Other suggestions included greater communication and co-operation between parent groups, schools and youth organisations, development of better relationships between police and young people, and the establishment of an after-hours information support and referral service staffed by either volunteers or staff. A 'city link program' whereby young people living in rural and isolated areas are linked and stay with young people living in urban areas was another solution provided by the forums. A mobile health unit was also suggested.

Particular concern related to accessing health information (especially contraceptive advice) anonymously. Young people commented about the waiting period often needed to see their local doctor and difficulties associated with having to see the only doctor in a small community.

Ongoing consultation with young people was raised a number of times throughout the forums. Suggested ways of doing this included replicating the method undertaken by OYAF in this consultation and an annual forum, where young people, services and relevant government departments could exchange information, concerns and ideas.

Again confidentiality was recognised as an important issue and it was recommended that a state-wide code of conduct be developed regarding confidentiality and the provision of services to young people. The need for protocols between schools, youth and community organisations to ensure access and information provision to students was also recommended.

Education

Transitional support for students moving from Grade 6 to Year 7 and from Year 10 to Year 11 that addressed social as well as the educational issues was a common solution discussed. The development of protocols between schools and youth and community organisations to facilitate the provision of information about health and other issues in schools was raised a number of times. The establishment of a youth services and resources 'expo' in schools each year was also a very popular idea.

Due to the extra hours required for travelling to and from school by rural and isolated students, it was recommended that some time during school hours be allocated for doing homework.

Extending course options through TAFE, schools and other VET providers by offering these courses in one school so that students do not have to leave the area, and the provision of adult education courses at times young people can attend were other solutions raised.

To Be Informed, Heard and Resourced

Many groups identified a need for young people to be informed, heard and to have an influence over both community decisions and decisions that directly impacted on them. The establishment of a state-wide youth council that included young people from around the state and from a wide variety of backgrounds was suggested often by groups as a way for young people to be heard. It was further suggested that the council could meet two or three times a year for a two-day forum. Relevant Ministers could be invited to attend part of the forums to be informed on the issues impacting on young people and to take advice on policy and programs for young people.

Other suggestions included local government youth councils that could advise on community issues and be involved in local area decision-making, and the representation of young people on management committees of organisations that impact on the lives of young people. Creating opportunities for young people to contribute to decisions about policy and programs that affect them, through more consultation, was another popular solution suggested.

The need to raise a more positive profile of young people through the use of the media was a strong recommendation. Other solutions that involved the media included a quarterly state-wide newsletter for rural young people, greater use of magazines currently accessed by young people, a youth page in local newspapers and the establishment of community radio for young people.

Employment and Training

Solutions and strategies in relation to employment and training included ensuring access to employment and training information through:

- maintaining youth access centres or an equivalent;
- providing career advice in schools;
- providing information about training options via pamphlets;
- community Internet facilities;
- information days, free call services;
- community billboards;
- transport services; and
- access to public computers.

Many of the solutions recognised the need for services and training providers to come to rural and isolated areas or to provide free call numbers. The establishment of mobile outreach services to provide information and advise on career options, and the establishment of rural employment officers, were other common solutions suggested.

Peer education was perceived as an effective means of transferring information. It was suggested that better networks need to be developed between training services and industry to ensure information is provided to rural areas.

There were a number of solutions and strategies suggested about the creation of job opportunities including the establishment of youth specific training options, for example through proposed youth cafés, and the establishment of sustainable rural specific industries such as market gardens. There were also recommendations about more job sharing and flexible hours options and recommendations to establish mentoring programs involving older people and businesses. In recognition of the lack of jobs available in Tasmania for young people it was recommended that young people be provided with positive alternatives to employment such as self sustainability.

Union visits to schools to provide information about wages, rights and occupational health and safety and to ensure that young people are not exploited in employment and training programs were perceived as essential in the current employment climate.

PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Promotion and development of rural and isolated communities was perceived as being influenced by some of the other issues raised. Common solutions raised included employment initiatives that involved tourism and the development of local resources, festivals and beautification projects. The participants felt that promotion and development of isolated areas encouraged and lifted a community's esteem as a whole and assisted in preventing young people from leaving the rural areas in search of a better existence.

A LITERATURE SURVEY

To ensure greater usefulness of the final report, a literature search was undertaken to identify other major studies on issues concerning young people living in rural and isolated areas around the country.

CONCLUSION

This report represents the final compilation of all the information obtained to this point. The feedback and implementation phases are still to occur.

The information and knowledge gained through the process will be used to further develop policy and programs within the State Government. It is hoped that the information will also be used by small communities, organisations and services to develop their own responses to the issues affecting young people. It is also hoped that the research will provide direction for further research in relation to the issues raised.

It was noted that a number of young people targeted had already been involved in other focus groups on a variety of issues and were 'consulted out'. Often these young people felt disillusioned with the outcome of previous consultations. They expressed concern about whether the information they provided would really effect change. It was explained that, while one of the aims of the process was to inform government and further develop policy and programs in rural and isolated areas, some of the solutions would be ones that they would be able to implement in their local areas. This seemed to allay most of their concerns. However, it is worth noting the feeling of anxiety expressed by young people about being consulted as a tokenistic means of gathering information, or being consulted with for the sake of consulting, without feedback or follow-up regarding outcomes.

SECTION ONE

BACKGROUND

OYAF assists in the co-ordination and development of youth policy development across State government agencies and facilitates the flow of information about programs, services and issues affecting young people. As part of this process OYAF is involved in consultation with and information provision to service delivery agencies and young people, both on an informal and formal basis, to assist in the development of coherent and consistent State government responses to the contemporary situations of Tasmanian young people.

To assist in this process, the Minister responsible for youth affairs, The Hon. Denise Swan, MHA, agreed to the implementation of a program of issue-based consultations with young people and the youth sector in general.

The three priority issues areas identified were **arts and creativity**, **issues impacting on young people living in rural and isolated areas**, and **youth justice**. The issues areas were determined by the Government, taking account of the recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Youth Affairs (State government agencies), the State Youth Link Committee (the Ministerial advisory body on Youth Affairs comprising non-government agencies and local government), young people and the Joint Officers Group (State and Commonwealth government agencies servicing young people). This report is the result of the second issues consultation.

TASMANIAN YOUTH POLICY STATEMENT

In 1995, the Tasmanian Government launched its first comprehensive youth policy statement. All government agencies with a specific responsibility for the development of policy and programs affecting young people provided OYAF with information on the principles and objectives underpinning their work with young people. This information was then consolidated to form the first whole-of-government policy overview on young people in Tasmania.

The information on young people living in rural and isolated areas contained in the *Tasmanian Youth Policy Statement (1995)* is as follows:

"***Principle***

The State Government recognises the unique circumstances of young people who are geographically isolated and is committed to providing resources which encourage their participation in mainstream activities. When geographic isolation inhibits young people, the Government is committed to the development of policies and the provision of programs and services to overcome the disadvantage.

Objectives

- *To design and provide where appropriate, accessible services, programs and financial subsidies to meet the special needs pertaining to isolation.*

- *To provide a co-ordinated approach to service and program provision to better meet the full range of needs of young people who are geographically isolated.*
- *To provide resources so that isolation does not preclude young people from using and participating in the full range of services provided by Government such as health, education, training, recreational, employment and cultural services.*
- *To develop specific policy and programs in the area of vocational education and training which aim to:*
  - *ensure that geographical isolation does not preclude young people from participating in as full a range as possible of vocational education and training activities; and*
  - *improve co-ordination so that government services and programs interact to better meet the full range of needs of young people in training."* (p. 32)

In addition the document also states that:

"The State Government is committed to identifying issues which affect young people and co-ordinating responses to meet their needs through co-operation and consultation with young people, their communities, industry, business, the non-government youth sector and the three tiers of government." (p. 8)

THE PURPOSE OF THIS CONSULTATION

The issues impacting on young people living in rural and isolated areas have been recognised as important by local government, State Government and Commonwealth Government. In Tasmania, while there has been some research about some of these issues, there has not yet been a comprehensive analysis which addresses the whole range of issues, and provides solutions to the concerns raised.

The purpose of this consultation was to go some way towards achieving such an analysis by seeking insight into issues identified by young people living in rural and isolated areas so as to inform further policy and program development by State government agencies. As well as obtaining vital information from young people, OYAF considered it important to obtain the views of people working with young people, from youth and community organisations, the three tiers of government, schools, industry and from community members generally.

By obtaining information from a broad range of stakeholders, this report provides a valuable, comprehensive, whole-of-community perspective on the issues impacting on young people living in rural and isolated areas, and possible solutions to some of the problems.

The information and knowledge gained through the process will be used to further develop policy and programs within the State Government. The information will also be provided to small communities, organisations and services to develop their own responses to the issues affecting young people. It is also hoped that the research will provide direction for further research in relation to the issues raised.

Definition

The United Nations defines 'youth' as being young people between the ages of 12 and 25 years. Governments in Australia have agreed to use the same definition. Therefore, in this report and other documentation about young people in Tasmania, OYAF uses the same definition.

What does being a young person mean?

'Youth' is the time between being a child and becoming an adult. It denotes the journey to independence; a struggle between responsibility, accountability, peer-group expectations, social expectations and social consciousness. People in western industrialised societies are normally granted societal rights according to their age. These rights include the right to live independently, to work, to marry, to drive a car and to vote. Those not yet legally granted these 'adult' privileges, may find that their ability to fully participate in society and to achieve in ways most commonly recognised by communities is restricted or limited. Such participation is also limited in times of high youth unemployment, and by lack of income.

Traditionally, the images of 'youth' that are portrayed in society and the media are generally of 'youth in trouble' (victims) and 'youth as trouble' (problems). Stereotyped perceptions of young people impact on their ability to participate and achieve in society despite the fact that these views are often not accurate and provide no indication of the true contribution made by young people to our society. Young people, as a specific population group, are as diverse as our total society. The issues impacting on them are equally diverse.

Changes in the numbers of young people

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures from the 1996 Census showed that there were approximately 92 379 young people living in Tasmania, representing 20% of the State's total population of 459 041. Since 1981, Tasmania has seen a gradual decline in the proportion of young people in the total State population. In 1981, 25% of Tasmania's population was aged between 12 and 25 years of age. By 1991, this figure had dropped to 21% and in 1996 had declined to 20%. In 1996, the actual number of young people had declined by 3241 since the 1991 Census. The most significant decline between 1991 and 1996, has occurred between the ages of 18 and 20 years, where there were 2997 fewer young people; and in the 21–23 years age bracket where there were 1526 fewer. There were 911 more young people in the 24–25 years age group and 556 more in the 12–14 years grouping.

Number of young people in Tasmania 1991 and 1996 Census' figures

Age group	Number of young people		% of 12–25 age cohort	
	1991	1996	1991	1996
12–14 years	21 156	21 712	22.2	23.4%
15–17 years	20 699	20 547	21.6	22.3%
18–20 years	21 585	18 588	22.6	20.2%
21–23 years	20 001	18 475	20.9	20.0%
24–25 years	12 146	13 057	12.7	14.1%
TOTAL	95 587	92 379	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1991 & 1996 Census of Population and Housing

The 1996 Census showed that young women made up 49.4% of young people in Tasmania.

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Cultural diversity

ABS 1996 Census data shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands young people represented 4.4% of young people living in Tasmania.

The figures also show that young Tasmanians who were born overseas represented 5.3% of all young people. 44.1% of overseas-born young Tasmanians originated from English-speaking countries including UK, New Zealand, USA, South Africa and Canada. The most common place of origin of young people born in non-English-speaking countries was Malaysia (6.7%). 3.1% of young Tasmanians spoke a language other than English at home.

Regional, rural and urban representation

There were 26 475 young people living in the Northern region of Tasmania, 20 543 young people living in the North-West region and 45,752 young people in the Southern region.

22% of young people in the North, 28% in the North-West and 12% of young people in the South were located in rural or isolated areas.

Region	young people as a % of total population in the region	% of Tasmanian young people	% of young people in each region living in rural areas
Northern	20.4%	28.5%	22%
North-West	19.4%	22.2%	28%
Southern	20.5%	49.3%	12%
State Total	20.0%	100%	18.4%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996 Census of Population and Housing

The following table shows the distribution of young people in each local government area in Tasmania according to the 1996 ABS Census. It shows the numbers of all Tasmanians and young people as a proportion of the total. The final column shows the percentage change in the number of young people between the 1991 and 1996 Census figures. Those areas showing the greatest percentage decrease were; West Coast (-27.1%), Waratah/Wynyard (-16.2%), George Town (-16.1%), Derwent Valley (-11.8%), Northern Midlands (-10.2%), Devonport (-10.1%), and Flinders (-8.0%). Those showing the greatest percentage increase in numbers of young people were Tasman (34.6%), Sorell (20.9%), Meander Valley (+12.4%), Kingborough (+12.1%), King Island (9.4%), and Central Highlands (8.1%). Overall, Tasmania saw a percentage loss of 3.4% in the number of young people over the five-year period.

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YOUNG PERSONS IN TASMANIA—BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS Source: *Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 1996*

Municipality	Total Male	Total Female	Total Persons	Male Aged 12–25	Male Aged 12–25 (% of total males)	Female Aged 12–25	Female Aged 12–25 (% of total females)	Total Aged 12–25	Total Aged 12–25 (% of total persons)	% change in total aged 12–25 1991–96
Launceston	30 106	32 323	62 429	7114	24%	7127	22%	14 241	23%	-5.8
Hobart	22 647	24 031	46 678	5529	24%	5748	24%	11 277	24%	-0.3
Clarence	23 210	24 250	47 460	5016	22%	4572	19%	9488	20%	-3.2
Glenorchy	20 775	22 292	43 067	4230	20%	4270	19%	8500	20%	-4.3
Devonport	11 495	12 322	23 817	2346	20%	2360	19%	4706	20%	-10.1
Kingborough	12 997	13 843	26 840	2657	20%	2594	19%	5251	20%	+12.1
Burnie	9425	9856	19 281	2003	21%	2065	21%	4068	21%	+0.5
Central Coast	9973	10 409	20 382	1952	20%	1892	18%	3844	19%	-2.7
West Tamar	9357	9516	18 873	1805	49%	1731	18%	3536	19%	+0.5
Waratah/Wynyard	6579	6773	13 352	1219	19%	1173	17%	2392	18%	-16.2
Brighton	6091	6382	12 473	1396	23%	1486	23%	2882	23%	+1.3
Meander Valley	8300	8470	16 770	1567	19%	1592	19%	3159	19%	+12.4
Huon Valley	6522	6383	12 905	1216	19%	1082	17%	2298	18%	+2.9
Northern Midlands	5697	5673	11 370	1005	18%	957	17%	1962	17%	-10.2
Derwent Valley	4852	4686	9538	993	20%	878	19%	1871	20%	-11.8
Circular Head	4149	3961	8110	858	21%	788	20%	1646	20%	-5.2
West Coast	3435	2905	6340	637	19%	550	19%	1187	19%	-27.1
George Town	3386	3268	6654	661	20%	650	20%	1311	20%	-16.1
Sorell	5071	5043	10 114	899	18%	857	17%	1756	17%	+20.9
Latrobe	3868	3759	7627	704	18%	695	18%	1399	18%	-4.3
Dorset	3631	3464	7095	642	18%	551	16%	1193	17%	-0.6
Kentish	2715	2614	5329	482	18%	475	18%	957	18%	-5.7
Southern Midlands	2716	2606	5322	440	16%	436	17%	876	16%	-4.3
Break O'Day	2858	2786	5644	420	15%	427	15%	847	15%	+1.2
Glamorgan/Spring Bay	2062	1974	4036	291	14%	255	13%	546	14%	-5.0
Central Highlands	1392	1163	2555	236	17%	177	15%	413	16%	+8.1
King Island	952	842	1794	168	18%	123	15%	291	16%	+9.4
Tasman	1149	1111	2260	169	15%	198	18%	367	16%	+34.6
Flinders	499	427	926	66	13%	49	11%	115	12%	-8.0
Tasmania	225	233 132	459 041	46 721	21%	45 758	20%	92 379	20%	-3.4

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SECTION TWO

INTRODUCTION

THE CONSULTATION MODEL

OYAF developed a consultation model that allows maximum participation from a wide range of contributors, taking into account time, travel and location limitations. The preferred model broadly reflects the principles of community development whereby agencies, organisations and individuals are asked to:

- identify issues and concerns;
- develop solutions and strategies;
- assist and lead in the implementation of solutions in local areas;
- evaluate the processes used; and
- suggest changes to policy and program development as required.

The role of OYAF was to act as a catalyst and to set up a process that ensured the maximum input possible, from a wide range of perspectives.

The model allows for extensive liaison with government agencies, youth and community service providers, young people, interested community members and other bodies that impact on the lives of young people. The diagram on the next page shows the model as adapted for the purpose of this consultation.

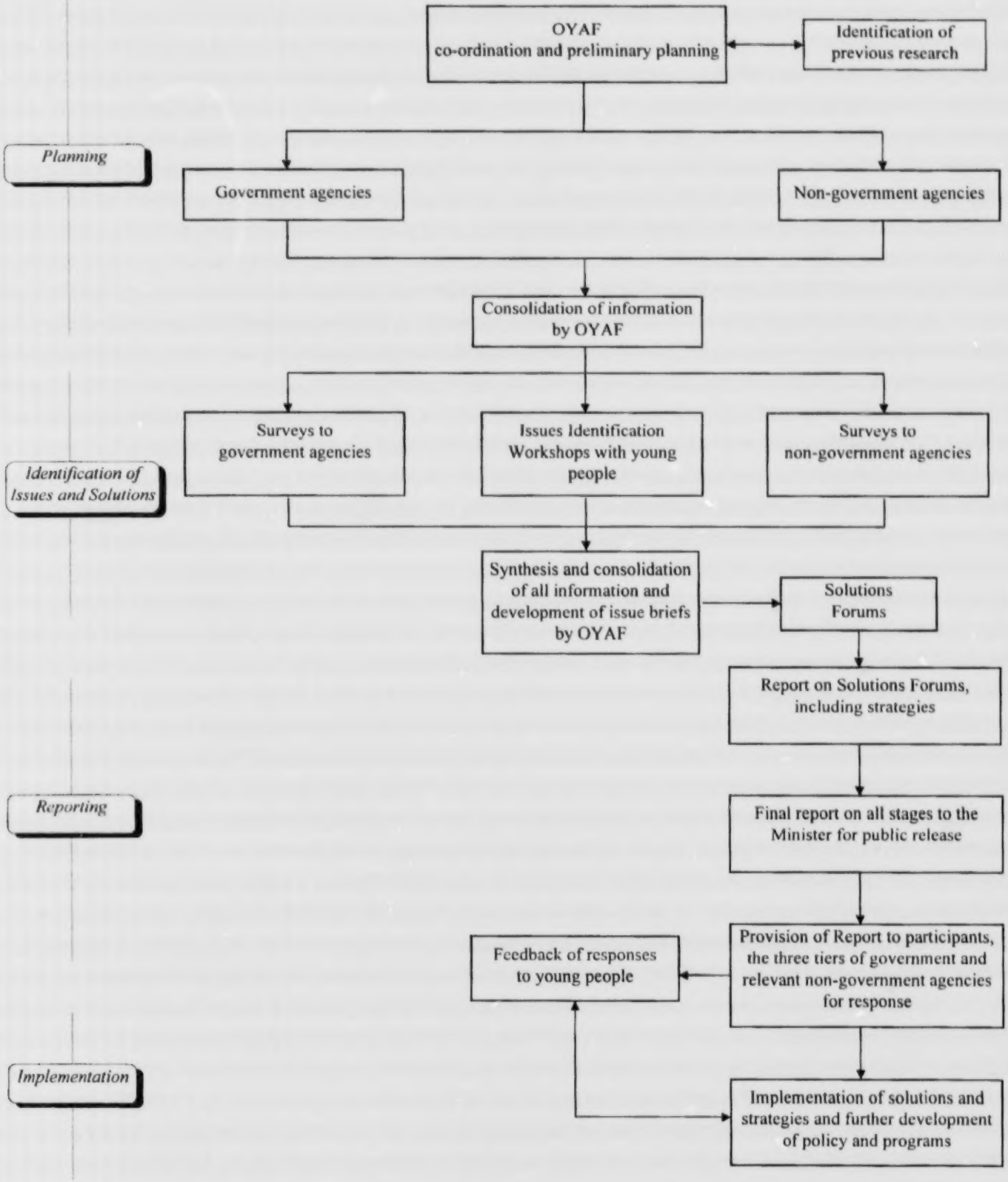
SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

OYAF liaised with government agencies and youth and community organisations at the beginning of the process and asked them to fill out a survey prior to the meetings commencing with young people. This step aimed to ensure that the issues addressed later in the consultation, and the information gained, would be relevant to agencies' further policy and program development, and to their service delivery.

Young people were consulted in Issues Identification Workshops which enabled them to raise their own issues with their own voices, using their own language to describe their situations.

The information and knowledge gained from the surveys and in the workshops was consolidated and ten issues briefs were developed which were then used in the series of Solutions Forums as a basis for the development of possible solutions and strategies for each of the issues raised.

This report represents the final compilation of all the information obtained to this point. The feedback and implementation phases are still to occur.


OYAF
co-ordination and preliminary planning
Identification of previous research
Planning
Government agencies
Non-government agencies
Consolidation of information by OYAF
Surveys to government agencies
Issues Identification Workshops with young people
Surveys to non-government agencies
Identification of Issues and Solutions
Synthesis and consolidation of all information and development of issue briefs by OYAF
Solutions Forums
Report on Solutions Forums, including strategies
Reporting
Final report on all stages to the Minister for public release
Provision of Report to participants, the three tiers of government and relevant non-government agencies for response
Feedback of responses to young people
Implementation
Implementation of solutions and strategies and further development of policy and programs

PRELIMINARY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Access to the consultation process by young people living in the most isolated parts of Tasmania was a major concern for OYAF. OYAF wanted to ensure these young people were able to participate in the process without incurring personal expense or facing travel difficulties.

Ensuring that concerns from all the interest groups and stakeholders were heard, validated and not dominated by one or more interest group was also a consideration of OYAF. Thus, appropriate means of communicating with different groups and individuals were sought.

Ensuring that the final product was a meaningful and useful resource for young people and small isolated communities, as well as for policy and program planners in government and non-government agencies, was a further consideration.

STRATEGIES ARISING FROM PRELIMINARY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Strategy 1

Surveys were provided to government and non-government organisations after discussions were held with both groups.

Government and non-government agencies advised OYAF that this strategy would be the most efficient way of ensuring their participation in identifying issues, given the volume of work undertaken by the staff from these agencies and the time constraints they experienced.

Strategy 2

Issues identification workshops with young people living in rural and isolated areas were held to gain information about the issues affecting them.

It was perceived after discussions with young people that they would prefer to verbalise their concerns in groups. Young people said that they were rarely given an opportunity to speak about their concerns in a meaningful way and that they appreciated the chance to do so. Those young people who were unable to attend forums were given an opportunity to fill in a survey form if they wanted to.

Strategy 3

The workshops and the forums were held in rural and isolated areas.

Wherever possible regional centres and cities were avoided in preference for smaller, more isolated towns. However, services and organisations that were located in regional or city centres which provided services to rural and isolated communities were welcomed and encouraged to attend the forums.

Strategy 4

Travel expenses were reimbursed to young people by OYAF when out-of-pocket expenses were incurred.

Strategy 5

To ensure that the final report would be useful to all stakeholders, it was decided to structure the Solutions Forums in a way that allowed the development of ideas through a community development strategic planning process.

Strategy 6

To ensure greater usefulness of the final report, a literature search was undertaken to identify other major studies on issues concerning young people living in rural and isolated areas around the country.

AIMS OF THE CONSULTATIONS

- To identify and explore issues impacting on young people in rural and isolated areas.
- To identify the aspirations of these young people.
- To involve young people in decisions that affect them.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of the issues for the purpose of policy and program development.
- To inform the three tiers of government, youth and community organisations and other bodies about the issues impacting on young people.
- To identify the needs of young people in relation to access to services and activities, and develop ways to improve this access, with a particular emphasis on disadvantaged young people.
- To provide a final report outlining the process and outcomes.
- To provide feedback on the implementation or adoption of recommendations to young people.

SIGNIFICANT STAKEHOLDERS AND INTEREST GROUPS

For consultation purposes

- Young people living in rural and isolated communities
- Other people living in rural and isolated communities
- Youth and community organisations, and service providers working with young people
- Local, State and Commonwealth government youth service providers
- Business, industry and training representative bodies
- Schools and colleges

For reporting purposes

- Minister
- Young people
- State Government agencies
- Youth and community organisations, service providers and local governments
- Other participants in the process

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THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES

Surveying of government and non-government organisations

Heads of agencies were contacted and asked to identify relevant contact person/s within their agency to provide advice, information and an ongoing contribution to the process. The government contact officers and those from non-government organisations were then surveyed (see Appendix 4) to identify:

- issues impacting on young people living in rural and isolated areas;
- how these issues may be dealt with;
- difficulties in servicing young people living in rural and isolated areas; and
- what issues they may like to know more about.

The issues identified and further concerns are detailed in Appendices 5 and 6. Over 200 youth and community organisations and 18 government agencies were contacted. OYAF provided a 'free-post reply' service to ensure a greater probability of return and that organisations incurred no expenses. In addition, agencies were able either to fax or phone information through. The various options worked well and a good response was received.

Issues Identification Workshops with Young People

OYAF asked youth and community organisations to identify young people who would be representative of other young people in similar circumstances. Limited resources meant that running a workshop in each rural and isolated area was not possible. However, it was possible to look for common threads, and draw on the experiences of young people who did participate, for indicators of issues and common areas for development.

Over 80 youth and community organisations were invited and encouraged to bring, send or inform young people about the consultations. Secondary schools in rural and isolated areas were also asked to send representatives, as were local councils, neighbourhood houses and youth groups in those areas.

A series of eight consultations were held with young people in the following rural and isolated areas:

- Huonville;
- New Norfolk;
- Ouse;
- St Helens;
- Smithton;
- Sorell;
- Westbury;
- Wynyard; and
- Zeehan.

Legend

- ▲ Issues Identification Workshops
- ■ Solutions Forums
- ▯ Towns where young people came from

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These areas were chosen based on the responses received by the communities in the first phase of the project. The map identifies the locations of the consultations.

One hundred and twenty three young people (72 young women and 51 young men) attended the workshops. Their ages ranged from 12 to 22 years with the majority of young people being between 13 and 17 years. Young people from other rural and isolated areas across the State including King Island also participated.

The workshops were structured to enable young people to identify their own issues. Adults who attended the consultations were asked to sit to one side and listen to the discussions or to leave for a couple of hours. There were mixed responses from adults to this request, but by the end of each workshop attending adults indicated they were impressed with the ability of young people to articulate their concerns. They gained an understanding of the importance of allowing young people to have an independent opportunity to identify their own issues among their peers. (The adults were invited to attend the second round of forums to assist with the development of solutions.)

It was noted that a number of young people targeted had already been involved in other focus groups about a variety of issues and were 'consulted out'. Often these young people felt disillusioned with the outcome of previous consultations. They expressed concern about whether the information they provided would really effect change. It was explained that, while one of the aims of the process was to inform government and further develop policy and programs in rural and isolated areas, some of the solutions would be ones that they themselves could implement in their local areas. This seemed to allay most of their concerns. However, it is worth noting the feeling of anxiety expressed by young people about being consulted as a tokenistic means of gathering information, or being consulted with for the sake of consulting, without feedback or follow-up regarding outcomes.

Structure of the workshops

The workshops were structured in a way that allowed young people to discuss issues among their peers. They were provided with copious amounts of paper, textas and time. Young people were asked the following questions.

- What are the good things about where you live?
- What are the bad things about where you live?
- What are the issues impacting on young people living in your area?
- What are some of the things that could be done to fix or change the situation?
- What could government provide to change the situation?
- What would you like more of in your area?

For those young people who were unable to attend the forums a number of alternative strategies were available to them. They were able to access a survey as individuals and return it to the 'free-post reply' address (see Appendix 7) or they could set up a group of their own with the support of a youth worker, and discuss as a group the issues impacting on young people. All information gathered in this way was to be used in the same manner as information gathered through the consultations. However, at the time of writing, only one group had gone ahead with this process, although other local youth workers do plan to go through the process with young people in the future.

Generally, the issues and concerns raised were consistent across the board, though there was some variance which mainly appeared to be influenced by the nature of isolation experienced by young people, i.e. whether young people had come from one of the islands, or had access to regional centres on a regular basis. Reports from each of the Issues Identification Workshops were treated as confidential outside that workshop.

All the information gained through surveying of government and non-government sectors and young people who participated in the workshops was synthesised and consolidated into ten issues briefs which were used to provide an overview of what was discussed in the first phase of the consultation and to provide a focus for the development of solutions.

IDENTIFICATION OF SOLUTIONS

Solutions Forums were held to provide the opportunity for communities to meet with young people to develop solutions and strategies to deal with the concerns raised in the issues briefs. The forums were based on research showing that communities who go through this process are more committed to achieving the outcomes and are more likely to be successful. It recognised that communities are more able to identify their own issues and solutions and that 'outsiders' are often not 'in tune' with local community culture and customs. Thus, OYAF acted as a catalyst and provided structure to and facilitation for the process.

Invitations to the forums were sent to all the relevant stakeholders and interest groups, and to all the young people who had participated in the initial consultations. A wide range of participants attended. Organisational representatives came from youth and community organisations generally, health services, drug and alcohol services, Commonwealth and State government agencies, neighbourhood houses, schools and colleges, local councils, housing services and sports organisations. Young people from schools, youth groups and as independent participants attended the forums, as did interested community members. An average of 25–30 participants attended each Solutions Forum.

Forums were held in:

- Huonville;
- New Norfolk.
- St Helens; and
- Westbury;
- Wynyard;

These areas were chosen on the basis of youth and community organisations' expressions of desire to assist in the process. Under no circumstances was their selection intended to suggest that these areas are any more or less disadvantaged due to their isolated nature than other rural and isolated communities. While the forums were held in these areas specifically, representation from many other small isolated communities was evident and it is believed that a broad cross section of representation from rural and isolated communities was achieved.

Structure of forums

After an introduction session on the role of OYAF and the purpose of the forums, participants were asked to break up into groups. Each group then chose to deal with one of the issues previously identified and the issues briefs were used to give direction and focus to their discussions. Participants were able to participate in two issues groups of their choice.

Each group was provided with proformas which enabled them to identify and record:

- possible solutions;
- the resources and support required;
- who should be involved; and
- what they could do.

In some instances, groups chose to combine some of the issues for example, isolation and small communities. At another forum it was felt that the issues of isolation would be largely dealt with through dealing with the issues of transport, something to do and somewhere to go, support, and service provision and information.

The solutions proposed by each forum were then consolidated and form Section Four of this report. Where appropriate some additional information regarding resources and activities was included by OYAF.

SECTION THREE

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Information gained from the government and non-government sectors' surveys and from the young people who participated in the workshops, was consolidated and synthesised under ten general headings and issues briefs were developed with the following titles:

1. Isolation
2. Small communities
3. Transport
4. Something to do and somewhere to go
5. Drugs and alcohol
6. Access to service provision, information and support
7. Education
8. To be informed, heard and resourced
9. Employment and training
10. Promotion and development

The following pages provide a general overview of the discussions and a summary of the issues and ideas raised in each brief.

(Where specific ideas related to more than one issues area, these have been repeated.)

1. ISOLATION

The issue of isolation was intrinsic to many of the concerns identified by young people. It was recognised by all stakeholders that isolation impacted on access to facilities and activities that others take for granted such as transport, education, employment, social opportunities and general resources. One group talked in terms of seeing such access as a privilege.

Students felt that schools in isolated areas appear to be limited in resources and have difficulty maintaining good teachers who are likely to leave the area after a few years.

Distance to schools means that many young people do not have the same education opportunities as others and for some families and young people the cost of accommodation means that they do not continue with their schooling.

Participants from Flinders Island identified the fact that many young people have to make huge changes to go to Launceston to attend schools. For some young people the demands of this transition is too much and they return to the island. Participants identified the need for support and information for students having to leave their area to attend schools and for more and better accommodation options.

Many young people in isolated areas said that they did not know what educational, employment and training opportunities were available to them, or how to access those opportunities.

Telephones are the major form of communication for many rural and isolated young people, both with their friends and for accessing information. Greater access to public, private and mobile phones and subsidised phone costs were recommended by many groups.

Summary of issues and ideas raised included:

- a lack of access to services and facilities;
- a need for more social activities locally or accessible options elsewhere;
- a lack of transport facilities and options;
- the need for training for teachers in identifying issues such as depression in young people;
- more support services and counsellors are required;
- distance schooling means further isolation from peers;
- loneliness contributes to depression and possibly suicide;
- drug abuse is a concern;
- access to more education, employment and training opportunities;
- the general lack of confidentiality;
- a lack of access to information about services;
- non-judgemental services are needed; and
- there is too much pressure about schooling, employment and the future.

2. SMALL COMMUNITIES

Young people and service providers suggested that living in a small community has its good points and bad points. Lack of privacy and gossip were raised by young people as major issues. Many young people did not feel able to confide in anyone. As a result they were often unable to access information and support. One group made a number of suggestions about building community relations to combat issues such as spreading gossip.

Many young people felt as though they were always being watched and judged in small communities. They felt it was hard to stay in a small town if they are identified by the police as trouble makers because they are constantly being watched. Whilst many young people felt this, some young people described the good relationships that existed between individual police officers and young people in their community.

A non-acceptance of diversity contributed to group and social pressure, and young people often felt the need to conform rather than be excluded from peer groups.

Young people enjoyed the freedom of living in a small community such as the ability to walk freely on the street, living in clean open spaces and good surf.

Young people expressed a need for more services such as the Internet in small communities. Government and non-government organisations were concerned with effective service provision in small communities and a lack of access to information and education and training.

Summary of issues and ideas raised included:

- reduced privacy;
- problems when there is a relationship breakdown between police and young people;
- too much gossip;
- lack of confidentiality;
- lack of acceptance of difference and diversity,
- lack of information and support;
- the need to improve community relations;
- the lack of service infrastructure;
- loneliness;
- a feeling of safety because you know everyone;
- limited life opportunities;
- no employment or training options in small communities;
- the need to leave the area to go to school, get a job or access training, even if you don't want to;
- lack of entertainment; and
- it is peaceful, clean and lots of good surf.

3. TRANSPORT

All stakeholders identified transport as a major issue of concern. The most common concerns included lack of transport options, travel times, limitations caused by availability of transport and the cost of travel. Poor roads were also identified as a problem in some areas. The availability of travel was perceived by all stakeholders as impacting on many other issues, including access to education, social events, information and service provision. Young people raised the topic of transport in most of the consultations held as did both the government and non-government sector.

Young people wanted more transport to larger population centres. Many centres only have one bus into 'town' in the morning which returns in the evening. This was particularly relevant for accessing shops and the cinema. It was often noted that buses did not enable young people to travel to the cinema and return the same night. It was recommended that transport of some kind be available on Friday and Saturday evenings in rural and isolated areas. Some more isolated groups also suggested that there be buses which travelled to town on Friday and back on Sunday to enable weekend visits.

Bus fares were seen as expensive and the idea of subsidies was raised a number of times. It was also suggested that there be greater access to school and other community buses by young people (including non students).

Students were concerned with the long distances they were travelling to get to and from school. Sometimes students are required to do many hours of homework after travelling long distances. One group of young people suggested more study periods in school to enable rural students to do their homework during the day rather than after their journey home.

Several groups suggested the use of a small 'on-call' bus or car-pool system.

Summary of issues and ideas raised included

- a general lack of transport;
- the long distance travel required and lack of options;
- the high cost;
- having to rely on parents;
- hitchhiking as a dangerous form of transport;
- behaviour of some young people on public transport;
- low road standards;
- the need for more appropriate travel times;
- enabling school bus services to include non students; and
- lack of public transport links from one rural centre to others.

4. SOMETHING TO DO AND SOMEWHERE TO GO

This was one of the major concerns raised by young people, service providers and government agencies. The range of facilities available and desires of young people varied from area to area. Lack of facilities meant that sometimes clashes between police and young people occurred because young people had few places to meet other than at bus stops or on the streets. Young people stated that they often got into trouble for hanging around their homes or around the street yet in many cases they had no alternative. Boredom often led to vandalism and in some cases other crimes.

The *Shark Pool* on the ABC television program *Heartbreak High* was frequently referred to as the type of place they would like. The *Shark Pool* is where young people meet, eat, play pool and is staffed by young people. Such a place was also identified as a source of employment for young people.

All stakeholders identified the need to run activities for young people and the idea of a youth-oriented festival was raised several times.

Young people were frustrated by the lack of responsibility accorded to them.

Young women identified the need for sports and recreation activities that were for them. They wanted more than just football, cricket and soccer. The need for facilities other than sporting ones was also raised by young men.

Summary of issues and ideas raised included:

- young people want a place of their own that was parent-free to meet and socialise. They want to be able to organise and run the space themselves;
- a place to do their homework with others;
- a youth festival;
- the lack of infrastructure;
- the lack of social opportunities;
- loneliness;
- boredom;
- low self esteem;
- low expectations of the future and lack of foreseeable future;
- young people noted that they needed a place to go more so in the winter yet summer was the time organisations were more likely to run events;
- participation of young people in making decisions which would affect them;
- sports and recreation facilities for young women as well as young men;
- interaction between communities; and
- young people want skateboard and rollerblading facilities, a swimming pool, and bike tracks. They also want more activities including weekend city visits, the provision of Timezone style room, an eight-ball parlour (not in licensed premises), cinema/film nights, Pizza Bar/MacDonald's style outlets, access into shops without being harassed, bands and discos or underage rages, trips away, sports and sporting facilities, concerts and festivals, and a graffiti wall.

5. DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Drugs and alcohol were raised as an issue for discussion by all stakeholders.

Whilst many participants recognised that young people may use drugs and alcohol, most of the participants did not identify it as a major issue of concern, though some other community members did.

Most groups of young people identified a link between drug taking in rural and isolated areas and having nothing to do and nowhere to go. Some young people raised the links between crime and drug taking.

Government and non-government organisations seemed to be far more concerned with this issue than young people. These organisations were concerned with provision of resources, and access to information and support services.

Drugs and alcohol generally were discussed in relation to the provision of accurate information, harm minimisation and trusting young people to make informed choices.

Summary of issues and ideas raised included:

- abuse of drugs;
- links between crime and drug taking;
- legalisation regarding possession of some drugs;
- access to good information about drugs;
- difficulty in maintaining confidentiality by agencies and peers;
- links to violence;
- lack of things to do;
- need for resources such as drug education;
- links to suicide;
- need for crisis services;
- the focus should be on harm minimisation;
- public awareness; and
- informed choices.

6. Access to Service Provision, Information and Support

Young people want greater access to support and information, and government and non-government services want to provide this greater access. However, young people do not want solutions imposed on them, they want to be listened to and they want to participate in developing solutions to issues that affect them and assistance to help them do it.

Young people want to be informed about opportunities that exist. Some of the most isolated and under-resourced groups had the most difficulty working out what they wanted as they had little information about what is available or possible.

Many of the smaller communities had a very small pool of supportive adults and these adults frequently burnt out. The need for a youth worker was identified in many areas and use of the Internet and e-mail was recommended by several groups as a way of communicating and accessing information.

Telephones for many rural and isolated young people are their major tool of access to friends and information. Greater access to public, private and mobile phones and subsidised phone costs were recommended by many groups.

Government and non-government organisations raised the lack of emergency and crisis service providers servicing rural and isolated areas and were concerned with the general lack of support to young people in these areas. Confidentiality was also raised by all stakeholders as an issue of concern. Particular concern related to accessing health information (especially contraceptive advice) anonymously. Young people commented about the waiting period often needed to see their local doctor and difficulties associated with having to see the only doctor in a small community.

Summary of issues and ideas raised included:

- access to support services such as crisis intervention, counselling, accommodation and employment;
- access to the latest information;
- confidentiality;
- young people's participation in decisions that affect them;
- consulting young people about service provision;
- access to youth workers;
- access to a youth centre;
- access to emergency and after-hours services;
- information about other services around the state;
- mobile or outreach services should visit small communities;
- more attention given to rural and isolated communities; and
- more funding of services for rural and isolated communities.

7. EDUCATION

Access to education and training facilities was an important concern for young people, government and non-government organisations.

Students were concerned with the long distances they were travelling to get to and from school. Sometimes students are required to do many hours of homework after travelling long distances. One group of young people suggested more study periods in school to enable rural students to do their homework during the day rather than after their journey home.

Young people wanted to meet other students who were also isolated from the classroom.

Young people wanted access to education that would prepare them more for life. They identified on-the-job training and learning about industry at school as really important.

Non-government agencies were concerned that educational opportunities for rural young people were becoming fewer and fewer. Information about further education opportunities and access to education options were not being disseminated adequately throughout rural areas. Young people, government and non-government services all identified the Internet as an under-utilised resource for isolated young people.

Some isolated young people recognised that they often have little idea of the opportunities available to them and young people accessing schools in larger population areas wanted support for the transition to secondary college.

Students felt that schools in isolated areas appear to be limited in resources and have difficulty maintaining good teachers who are likely to leave the area after a few years.

Distance to schools means that many young people do not have the same education opportunities as others and for some people the cost of accommodation means that young people do not continue with their schooling.

Summary of issues and ideas raised included:

- lower educational expectations from rural and isolated young people;
- low retention beyond compulsory education;
- reduced access to educational resources;
- lack of information about education and training options;
- less access to vocational training;
- want the same education and training opportunities as city students;
- accessing higher education opportunities on the Internet;
- want more opportunity to meet other students in isolated areas;
- integration programs for students who have to leave the islands to attend school on mainland Tasmania;
- little or no incentive to continue education;
- reduced motivation;
- transport difficulties and the long travelling distances to school;
- school should be more relevant to every-day living; and
- school should prepare you for work.

8. To Be Informed, Heard and Resourced

Young people want to be informed, listened to, heard, respected and to participate in decisions that affect their community. They want to be informed about current events and government actions that impact on them and their community. They want to be consulted by government and non-government organisations about what they want and need, and they want to participate in improving public perceptions of young people.

Young people have valued the opportunity to have a say through these consultations and would like more such involvement on other issues. Regular consultation processes were a frequent suggestion. Several groups identified the need for youth representation on local councils and in government and the need to establish young people's councils.

Young people want to see a positive change in relation to public perceptions of them. Participants frequently identified their perception that young people are untrustworthy, judged on their appearance and receive little respect from adults and the community in general. Often this was due to ignorance and making on-the-spot assumptions or based on single events.

Groups wanted to see more funding and resources targeting young people and often identified the 12–18 years group as particularly under-resourced in relation to other young people.

The non-government sector identified a lack of political support for young people. (Further to this, the Ministerial advisory body on youth affairs, the State Youth Link Committee (SYLC) has identified the need to develop mechanisms for a greater input by young people into policy and program development, and decision-making about issues that affect young people and their communities. SYLC suggested that there is a great lack of this opportunity across all three tiers of government and within youth and community organisations.)

Summary of issues and ideas raised included:

- to be consulted with about issues which affect them;
- to participate in decisions that will impact on them;
- the establishment of a peak body for young people to have a say;
- the need for local and regional youth representative bodies;
- to have a say at a local level and more infrastructure to do so;
- more consultations with young people;
- no tokenism;
- when change occurs they want their opinion to have counted;
- young people want to be trusted;
- need to redress negative judgements and perceptions of youth culture;
- there should be respect for young people and their views by the broader community;
- access to the latest information about young people;
- what does government think about young people?;
- more youth workers;
- doing things with young people instead of for them; and
- funding for youth specific consultations, information sharing and meetings.

9. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Employment and training were major concerns for young people, government and non-government service providers.

Young people are keen to get a job and want to work. They want better access to education and training (more information, more courses and more accessible, affordable training).

Young people were concerned about the lack of jobs and frequently noted that unless the family was in business they had little likelihood of accessing work.

Several groups identified the need to access part-time jobs whilst they were at school, as well as full-time employment when they left. Most groups felt they would need to leave the area, and in some cases the State, to gain employment.

Lack of accessible information means that many young people do not know the range of employment and training options available to them, and have limited awareness of future career possibilities.

Difficulties in accessing employment services were also identified. The use of Internet to access this information was recommended by some of the groups.

There was also concern expressed by government and non-government organisations and young people about the new Common Youth Allowance requirements and the impact this would have on young people living in rural and isolated areas.

In at least one area, young people are being exploited in terms of wages and they identified the need for more information about their employment rights.

Summary of issues and ideas raised included:

- lack of local jobs;
- pressure to get a job when there are none;
- more courses and training opportunities;
- training that leads to real jobs;
- access to information about training options;
- having to leave the area to get training and employment;
- the extra cost of travel for young people living in rural areas to access training and employment;
- no employment services in the area;
- need to access knowledge about unions and employment rights;
- affordable training;
- more support for unemployed people;
- information that is understandable; and
- subsidised employment schemes were perceived as bad because once the subsidy stopped so did the job.

10. Promotion and Development

Many of the groups recommended greater promotion and development of rural and isolated areas in order to attract more people to the area and to create employment.

Young people expressed a strong desire to promote rural areas and attract more people to both visit and live in small towns.

Many young people suggested having a festival to promote their town and thought the focus could be on attracting both young and old people to the towns. The festival could be a music or arts festival. Young people expressed a desire to have an alternative to the Agfest. They wanted more fun activities that would be attractive to young people.

Other suggestions included beautification and development of the towns, increasing facilities such as caravan parks, greater promotion of their area, and subsidises to local businesses to employ young people to handle tourists.

There is a strong belief that if a small area is promoted in the right way then employment and other opportunities would follow. The need for greater promotion of Tasmania's natural attractions was raised.

Summary of issues and ideas raised included:

- local youth festivals;
- encouraging the tourism trade;
- better promotion lifts a community's esteem;
- beautification and development of small towns;
- subsidised employment for tourist businesses; and
- media campaigns across Australia about rural Tasmania.

SECTION FOUR

SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED

The Solution Forums were able to develop a wide range of options which addressed the issues areas. In many cases the solutions were similar. These were consolidated and a comprehensive outline of possible solutions and strategies for each issues area follows. The sheets for each area begin with a summary of the common themes and solutions proposed by the forums.

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1. ISOLATION

Common Themes and Solutions

Many of the solutions and themes that were raised regarding the issue of isolation were dealt with through discussions in other issue areas. Generally, forum participants acknowledged the difficulties in living in isolated situations. Support groups for young people, greater access to emergency services and the employment of youth workers were common solutions raised. Forum participants suggested that greater access to services and the provision of more activities would discourage young people from participating in negative activities such as self harm and drug taking.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Community youth support groups	Confidentiality training, support person, venue, organisation of group or system	Youth and community organisations	• assist in the establishment of support group and give training in peer counselling and confidentiality • provide pamphlets about program
		Youth worker	• ongoing co-ordination of program and act as a first point of call into program
		Local council, Neighbourhood house	• provide a venue and equipment such as telephones and paper
		Young people	• be trained in peer counselling so they can support other young people who are feeling isolated
		Telstra/Optus	• provide cheap phone charges so support can occur on telephone if necessary
Greater access to services and facilities	A more creative approach to service provision by service providers and government, mobile services, computers and Internet	State Government	• provide equal access to services, funding and mobile government services and facilities

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2. SMALL COMMUNITIES

Common Themes and Solutions

As was the case with the issue of isolation, many of the issues raised regarding small communities were dealt with through other issues. For example, lack of infrastructure, acceptance of difference, gossip and co-operation between services, police and young people were dealt with as part of the support, service provision and information issue area. Forum participants recognised that by addressing issues raised together, many of the concerns could be resolved by changing day-to-day practices through the work they carried out.

Involving young people in land development projects and public space developments was a strategy endorsed by many groups including industry, young people and local council representatives. Further, young people repeatedly expressed a desire to have more involvement in community decisions and projects.

'Confidentiality' was raised by many throughout the forums. The need for strict protocols, and an assurance that they would be adhered to, was expressed.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Statewide youth festival that travels to the three regions	Venue, artists, writers, bands, funding, co-operation and co-ordination	Local council	• provide a good venue in each of the three regions
		Statewide committee of young people, youth workers, community organisations and members	• organise the event on an annual basis
		Schools, students	• provide their artwork, bands, anything they want to sell, dancers, DJs
		Craft and self-employed	• sell their goods and at the event
		Local council	• provides permits and assistance
Resource library	Camping equipment, leisure activity equipment, sporting equipment, buses, pool tables etc	All State government agencies that fund services	• instead of funding individual organisations to buy resources and run activities for young people, develop a central pool of resources so any organisation can borrow equipment and run an activity
Youth group meetings in a different rural area within same region once a month for discussion on issues and mixing with each other.	Venues in towns, transport, parental and community co-operation and support, sponsorship, young people, management committee	Youth worker	• organise and co-ordinate whole program and establish a management committee of young people, youth organisations and community members/parents
		Schools	• provide access for young people who would like to participate

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ISSUE: SMALL COMMUNITIES (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Youth meetings (continued)		Parents, community members	• arrange transport or car-pool roster
		Sponsorship/funding	• help with costs of transport, youth worker salary and food
		Young people	• organise group discussions: who will attend and be on the management committee
		Local council, youth or community organisations	• provide a venue
Internet network		All youth services	• have access to Internet network
		State Government	• provide services with computers and facilities
		All services	• should update information twice a year
One-stop shops	Location, co-operation between agencies (all tiers of government) and community organisations, funding, information	All government and non-government services, local government, federal government	• provide updated, regular information to services for young people (One-Stop Shop) • contribute to funding
Statewide codes of conduct regarding confidentiality and working with young people	United agreement as to code, co-ordination, enforcement and grievance processes. Co-operation and participation of youth and community organisations.	State youth peak body (Youth Network of Tasmania)	• co-ordinate process, form reference group who would develop code and guidelines for enforcement and grievance procedures for breach of code
		Unions	• provide guidance on management committee
		Youth organisations, OYAF	• provide guidance on management committee
		Young people	• provide guidance on management committee

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3. TRANSPORT

Common Themes and Solutions

Transport was perceived as a major issue by all groups. Many solutions and strategies were developed to respond to this issue. One of the most popular solutions included dealing with the inequitable costs associated with living in rural and isolated areas through the provision of concession cards for young people.

Limited bus services in isolated areas led to recommendations for private operators to extend operational hours, or to operate on alternative weekends to enable people to access regional centres. The current legislation doesn't allow for competitive services and it was recommended that changes to legislation in relation to Public Vehicle Licensing be made. Extending the use of school buses and existing community buses such as aged-care services buses to allow non-students and young people generally, access to regional centres for training, employment and other services was a popular solution.

Running a small community or shuttle bus that provided an 'other hours' service was also a common theme raised by a number of groups, as was the idea of an 'on-call' bus to be accessed by young people for trips. Other solutions raised regarding the issue of transport included resurrecting the passenger rail system or adding a small passenger carriage to current goods trains and the establishment of a public boat scheme and greater use of water as a transport option. A car-pool service or network involving parents and community members, lowering the driving age to 16 years and the establishment of hitchhiking pick up points with a range of safety provisions were other solutions.

In recognition that young people frequently use rollerblades and skateboards as a means of transport, it was recommended that there be a public campaign to establish their legitimate transport use and to inform young people and the public of safe use practices.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Concessions for rural and Isolated young people	Co-operation of transport industry	Transport industry	• create concessions for young people travelling from rural and isolated areas
		State Government	• provide subsidy incentives for bus/transport industry
Shuttle bus	Small community bus and drivers	Local Council	• administer the bus service • charge lower fares • provide 'other hours' service • provide accessible venue
Hitchhiking pick-up points	Special card to identify drivers and participants. Someone to organise.	State Government	• run special card program • produce special card for drivers who are willing to participate
		Drivers/community	• should have a police check with laminated identification card
		Police	• should do police check and provide a machine that puts in driver's card number at the pick-up point and register the ride (for safety)

ISSUE: TRANSPORT (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT COULD THEY DO
Car-pool service including car-pool network	Petrol, cars	Parents, community members	• participate in car-pool network, provide support
		Youth worker	• organise car-pool roster and set costs
Lower driving age to 16 years	Change of legislation	State Government	• change current laws
Private operators to extend hours of operation	Co-operation of private operators	Private operators	• operate later hours, or alternate weekends, so people can go into regional centres
Train service	Trains and tracks	State Government	• re-establish and operate passenger train service throughout Tasmania, especially on weekends • organise a private provider or do it themselves
Public vehicle licensing	Change of legislation	State Government	• change legislation; currently, legislation doesn't allow community buses to operate due to competition (Public Vehicle law)
Use school buses as community buses also	Co-operation from bus companies—maybe extra buses	Bus companies, State Government	• should allow non-students to travel on school buses so they can access town for training, looking for employment etc
Rollerblades, skateboards as transport (public campaign)		State Government, local councils	• should do a public campaign about the use of rollerblades and skateboards as a valid form of transport for young people; also include safety issues for both young people and the public so no-one is frightened and everybody is informed.
Public boat scheme for coastal town	Small boats/dinghies, young people, co-operation of bay and harbour commission and police.	Young people	• should be licensed to use small crafts to transport each other around the bays
		Service clubs	• provide small boats • charge a small price and use boat scheme as an employment opportunity for some young people
Deregulation of buses		State Government	• change legislation so small community operations can occur

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4. Something To Do and Somewhere To Go

Common Themes and Solutions

All the groups identified the need for youth specific space such as a youth centre. Another very popular suggestion was the provision of skateboard and rollerblade facilities. Specific activities for young people such as youth festivals, youth cafés and the employment of youth workers were other common solutions raised.

All groups recommended that young people play a significant role in the organisation and establishment of events and facilities. A common suggestion was the establishment of a state-wide or regional resource 'library' from which youth and community organisations could borrow equipment instead of making individual submissions to funding sources. It was perceived that this would be a more effective and efficient use of both resources and funding. Other commonly identified resources that could be used more efficiently included school facilities after-hours, local government buildings and unused public housing.

Possible Solutions	Resources/Support Required	Who Should Be Involved	What They Could Do
Youth centre 'hang out'	A venue, youth worker, pool table, music, CD player, food, drinks, health issues resources, TV, video, transport Centre could be opened from 4pm to 7.30pm week nights and later on Friday and Saturday nights Age 13–18 years	Parents and interested community members	• transport young people to and from venue • raise money for TV, video and CD player • help run, open and close the venue
		Local council	• provide a venue, TV, video, CD player and pool table • provide a mini bus
		Youth worker	• run or organise a roster of young people and parents/adults to run the centre • help with transportation • co-ordinate fundraising for equipment
		Young people	• attend venue, help run and make decisions about activities, help with fundraising for equipment, sell food and drink when venue is opened
		Youth organisation	• run education nights about issues such as drugs, sex, health, training, employment
		State Government	• provide funds for equipment and youth worker
Skateboard facility	Landscape designer, wood for ramps	Local council	• provide land
		Young people	• assist in designing facility • use facility
		Parents	• help obtain materials to build facility

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ISSUE: SOMETHING TO DO, SOMEWHERE TO GO (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Resource library	Camping equipment, leisure activity equipment sporting equipment, buses, pool tables etc	All State government agencies that fund services	• instead of funding individual organisations to buy resources and run activities for young people, develop a central pool of resources so any organisation can borrow equipment and run an activity
Film nights	Video recorder, videos, TV, venue, low cost for entry, transport and Youth worker	Young people	• help organise event and pay to attend evening
		Parents	• transportation and run evening
		Youth worker	• organise venue and be present at evening
		Local council	• supply TV, video recorder and video • supply a small bus to transport young people from long distances
Mobile activity and resource services	Bus, truck, workers, equipment such as sporting, leisure and education	Community organisations	• run the service in rural and isolated areas on weekends and after-hours
		State Government	• provide funds for rural mobile service like old bus library, just with different equipment
Rural camps for isolated young people to come together twice a year	Camp site, food, camping equipment, adults to attend, transport, funding	Young people	• be part of a management committee • organise event • decide on venue • organise activities at camp • attend camp
		Schools	• provide equipment for camping • provide use of a bus
		Parents, community members	• provide supervision at venue • be a part of management and organising committee • provide transport
		Youth worker	• organise and co-ordinate entire event
		Bus driver	• drive bus
		Service clubs	• fundraise for venue and food
		Church, community groups	• provide a camp site

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ISSUE: SOMETHING TO DO, SOMEWHERE TO GO (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Youth group meetings in a different rural area within same region once a month for discussion on issues and mixing with each other	Venues in towns, transport, parental and community co-operation and support, sponsorship, young people, management committee	Youth worker	• organise and co-ordinate whole program and establish a management committee of young people, youth organisations and community members/parents
		Schools	• can provide access for young people who would like to participate
		Parents, community members	• arrange transport or car-pool roster
		Sponsorship/funding	• help with costs of transport, youth worker salary and food
		Young people	• organise group discussions; who will attend and be on the management committee
		Local council, youth or community organisations	• provide a venue
Statewide youth festival that travels to the three regions	Venue, artists, writers, bands, funding, co-operation and co-ordination	Local council	• provide a good venue in each of the three regions
		Statewide committee of young people, youth workers, community organisations and members	• organise the event on an annual basis
		Schools, students	• provide their artwork, bands, anything they want to sell, dancers, DJs
		Craft and self-employed	• sell their goods and at the event
		Local council	• permits and assistance
Underage night clubs for Saturday and Sunday nights	Venue	Parents	• assist in organising and monitoring • provide food and drinks
		Local council	• provide venue
		Police	• support and help run event

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ISSUE: SOMETHING TO DO, SOMEWHERE TO GO (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Underage 'Woodstock' style event/festival	Bands (youth mostly) from schools, DJs, T-shirts, hats, jumpers, paddock, venue	State Government	• organise and provide funds
		Community organisations	• provide volunteers and have information stalls
		Businesses	• could sell food, drink, products
		Young people	• form a management committee to assist with organising, also make t-shirts, hats, jumpers and sell them
		Local council	• permits and venue
		Bands and entertainment	• play at event
		Youth worker, police, community	• ensure all is well, welcome to come and join in
Youth mobile gym	Gym equipment, truck to transport, youth workers, gym experts, advertising	Youth organisations	• run service
		State Government	• fund service
		Youth workers	• work with young people who participate
		Media	• some positive advertisement of issues
Use of school facilities after-hours for recreation activities	DECCD, youth workers, school facilities and equipment	Youth worker	• run after school activities using school gym and equipment
		Schools	• provide keys and give permission
		Young people	• form a committee and run, plan and attend activities

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ISSUE: SOMETHING TO DO, SOMEWHERE TO GO (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
One-stop coffee shop	Venue, co-operation of agencies, local council An organisation to support and co-ordinate shop, start-up funding, permanently attached youth worker, youth and community organisations, service information, Internet access, furniture	State Government	• provide a venue, start-up funding and assist with direction of shop
		Youth and community organisations, youth worker	• contact all other services in the area for contribution to employ attached youth worker • co-ordinate entire process • establish management committee comprising young people, community members, local council services etc • administer project, purchase computer and Internet access • provide training for young people in small business and resource centre
		Young people	• operate shop, upkeep of resources • be part of management committee, help set up shop, purchase furniture
		Volunteers, young people	• help serve light refreshments and develop skills, ongoing maintenance of shop
		Local council	• provide venue, support program, provide resources
		Service clubs	• help fundraise money for project
		Businesses	• commercial sponsorship in exchange for advertising

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5. Drugs and Alcohol

Common Themes and Solutions

At no time throughout the forums was illegal or legal drug taking condoned. However, recognition that young people do experiment with various substances including illegal and legal drugs was evident within the community. A desire to deal with this issue in a safe, responsible manner was the primary motive of participants in the forums. Young people frequently associated drug use with boredom and a range of exciting activities were suggested as alternatives.

The most common solution discussed throughout the forums was the need for accessible, accurate information on the effects and consequences of drug taking. Information requested included how to minimise the harm of drug taking, how to recognise an overdose situation and what to do in the event of one occurring and a list of emergency numbers to contact. A 'dry out' centre for young people and a 24-hour information telephone service were other suggestions.

Anti-drug events were also a common suggestion. Events included music festivals with transport provided for the most isolated young people and art exhibitions that reflected an anti-drug message. Peer education was perceived by many as the most effective means of transferring information about drugs to young people. Another solution suggested was a program where young people educated parents about the effects of drugs, and suggested appropriate parental behaviours and strategies to deal with young people who may be taking drugs.

Possible Solutions	Resources/support required	Who should be involved	What they could do
More information, accurate information	Internet, resource pamphlets	Schools	• should have a room where information on drugs can be obtained and resources and services can be accessed
		Community organisations	• provide information for young people about the effects of drugs
		State Government, community services	• fund community service organisations to write pamphlet
		Community organisations	• employ young people to design information for Internet and pamphlets
		Local government, small businesses	• make accurate information available
Harm minimisation information		As above	• as above
Advertising campaign about harm minimisation.	Media, funding, youth worker	Government and non-government organisations	• fund project • co-ordinate project
		Youth worker	• support young people in developing advertising project
		Young people	• develop advertising campaign and be employed to run it
		Media	• put campaign on TV, cinemas and radio etc

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ISSUE: DRUGS AND ALCOHOL (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Make it harder to obtain alcohol and cigarettes	Stricter policing and greater fines	Police	• police pubs and bottle shops and the purchasing of cigarettes more strictly, harsher penalties and more often
		State Government	• change legislation to stricter penalties for pubs, bottle shops and cigarette outlets who serve young people, ensure harsher penalties
		Parents	• should be fined if their children are caught buying alcohol or drinking alcohol under age or purchasing
		Shop keepers, pubs, bottle shops	• check every person's ID as a standard practice unless they are obviously over 18 years
Activities and events to entertain young people but also provide an opportunity to educate young people about drugs and their effects	Resources depend on activity chosen, young people Events could include statewide Battle of the Bands, beginning with regional events then a statewide one	Drug and alcohol services	• co-ordinate a series of ongoing events around the State and ensure the participation of young people from rural and isolated areas • provide information about drugs at the events
	Activities like rock eisteddfod, art exhibitions, youth festivals	Young people	• help organise events and contribute to development of information • be positive role models at events
		Management committee	• oversee entire program; should comprise young people, community members, youth workers, drug and alcohol workers, drug and alcohol services
		State Government, local council, police	• provide venue and funding • be on management committee and participate in events for supervision and to improve relationships between young people and police
Phone service 24 hours	Funding, counsellors, privacy laws, a room for phones, free non-local call	Counselling service	• run the phone service
		State Government	• provide funding; should be 24 hours and provide confidential information on harm minimisation
		Young people	• should be trained in counselling and help run the service and be positive role models

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ISSUE: DRUGS AND ALCOHOL (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Education about drugs in primary schools	Educational resource material and information on where to go if parents are drug users	DECCD	• provide positive education in primary schools about drugs so that children know their effects and so they also know where to go and what to do if parents are drug users
Dry-out centre for young people	Trained workers, accommodation, office facilities, funding	DCHS	• provide funding and trained workers
Positive Parents Program	Young people, venue, funding, resources, support, paper, photocopier, training	Youth organisations, drug and alcohol services	• provide young people with training about the issues that affect young people in relation to drugs and alcohol • co-ordinate program
		Young people	• provide educational sessions to concerned parents about young people, drugs and alcohol
		Parents	• attend program

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6. Access to Service Provision, Information and Support

Common Themes and Solutions

Common solutions provided by the forums included the development of a resource booklet and a survival handbook that included information on services, resources, funding, and support available to young people on the Internet. Information cards identifying emergency services and support in all regions, and a resource information bag for distance education students and students living in isolated areas were other popular solutions discussed. The use of easily accessible locations such as milk bars, hardware stores, bus shelters and local businesses to locate information about services and resources, was perceived as an effective means of information provision.

The Internet was also mentioned often as a valuable resource. The establishment of a 'youth home page' that linked a range of relevant information sites and which was accessible to the Tasmanian youth sector and young people was a very popular solution. The provision of Internet facilities in schools and public spaces such as libraries, police stations, hospitals and local municipal offices was also recommended.

A greater interaction and co-ordination of services was suggested and the establishment of mobile outreach services were also recommended. Other suggestions included greater communication and co-operation between parent groups, schools and youth organisations, development of better relationships between police and young people, and the establishment of an after-hours information support and referral service staffed by either volunteers or staff. A 'city link program' whereby young people living in rural and isolated areas are linked and stay with young people living in urban areas was another solution provided by the forums.

Ongoing consultation with young people was raised a number of times throughout the forums. Suggested ways of doing this included the method undertaken by OYAF and an annual forum, where young people, services and relevant government departments could exchange information, concerns and ideas.

Again confidentiality was recognised as an important issue and it was recommended that a state-wide code of conduct be developed regarding confidentiality and the provision of services to young people. The need for protocols between schools, youth and community organisations to ensure access and information provision to students was also recommended.

Possible Solutions	Resources/support required	Who should be involved	What could they do
Internet network		All youth services	• should have access to Internet network
		State Government	• provide services with computers and facilities
		All services	• should update information twice a year

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ISSUE: ACCESS TO SERVICE PROVISION, INFORMATION & SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Internet linkage		OYAF	• create links between all information on Internet relevant to Tasmanian youth sector and young people • provide hard copy resource booklet of Internet access numbers for services—could be linked through OYAF to begin with
		Services working for young people	• provide OYAF with Internet information for linkage project
Internet facilities through schools for infrastructure resource service	Schools, more computers, all community organisations, information regarding resources and support	State Government, DECCD, DCHS	• provide computers through schools • schools should have more computers • provide information about all services
		OYAF	• should co-ordinate entire project
		Community organisations	• should provide information about services and programs
		Libraries	• should have computers with information
		Local councils	• should have computers with information • all emergency information should be on computer and should be provided after-hours
		Police, hospitals	• provide computers with information after-hours as well
One-stop shops	Location, co-operation between government agencies and community organisations, funding, information	All government and non-government services	• provide updated, regular information to services for young people • contribute to funding
Municipal resource booklet	Publication costs, paper and someone to do it	Local government	• put together an information book listing all the local resources, supports and services in the area • put on Internet
		Youth worker	• employed by local councils to co-ordinate the booklet
		State Government	• provide funding for booklet
		Schools	• provide to young people through the schools
Improve public phone services	More public phones in rural areas, cheaper costs for rural and isolated areas, more servicing of public phones	Telstra/Optus	• provide more phones • charge less for non-local calls • service phones more regularly

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ISSUE: ACCESS TO SERVICE PROVISION, INFORMATION & SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
A survival handbook	Information on organisations working with young people, funding by State Government, Internet homepage, co-ordination	YNOT, OYAF, youth and community organisations, State Government	• OYAF to co-ordinate process • provide information regarding their services • provide funding for ongoing updating of booklet on Internet and hardcopy
Rural youth mobile health service	Bus (could be one of the old book mobile buses)	DCHS, State Government	• provide funding for service
		State Library	• provide old book-mobile bus service
		Community organisations	• provide information to be on bus for young people
		Doctor, nurse, dentist, health worker	• speak and advise young people on various issues • run workshops in rural areas about issues such as suicide, primary health etc
Greater co-ordination of health services for young people	Co-operation between youth specific health services and other health services	Health services	• develop protocol around service provision to young people to ensure they are meeting the aims of the State Youth Health Policy and State Health Strategy for Young People
		State Government, DCHS	• co-ordinate process—should include hospitals, dental services (for young people with low or no income) and should also include the establishment of a mobile rural and isolated health information service
Case managers and support workers to be placed in rural areas	Change priority of Commonwealth programs where case managers were replaced	Commonwealth Government	• place priority on young people in rural areas
State government children's services	Case workers	DCHS case workers	• young people in rural and isolated areas should be able to access case workers for support —there is a status called Youth Support for young people who are perceived to be at risk—young people living in isolated situations should be perceived to be at risk
Better relationship between police and young people.		Police	• access to young people through schools or other establishments or participation in youth activities to improve image
		Young people	• be willing to get to know local police
Ongoing consultations with youth people and community	Funding to OYAF	OYAF	• facilitate and co-ordinate in similar manner to Rural & Isolated Youth Consultations

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ISSUE: ACCESS TO SERVICE PROVISION, INFORMATION & SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Information rooms in schools	A room Co-operation from schools and DECCD, resources i.e. pamphlets, information, phone directory etc	Schools	• provide a room for resources
		Social workers	• ensure room has resources from community and youth organisations and telephone directory and list of emergency services
		Community organisations	• provide information to DECCD for dissemination throughout schools
		Government departments including DSS, DEETYA etc	• provide information about government programs to DECCD for dissemination throughout schools
		DECCD	• co-ordinate information from community organisations and dissemination throughout schools
		Young people	• manage and use room
Annual forum	Funding, venue, food	YNOT, OYAF	• co-ordinate
		Young people	• assist in co-ordination and management
		State Government	• provide funding for event
		Youth organisations	• provide resources and information about their organisation
		Minister for Youth Affairs	• forum should be an annual event for young people to raise issues and present them to the Minister
Stress management for volunteers	Trainers	Youth and community organisations	• provide volunteers working with young people in rural areas with training and support to ensure their ongoing maintenance
Information card for all three regions	Co-ordination of project in each region	Businesses	• small items to include in bag such as passes etc
		DCHS	• develop card for each region to include emergency services and after-hours services • provide to youth organisations for distribution to young people; card could include discount at various businesses
Development of a protocol between schools, youth and community organisations to access students	Co-operation between DECCD, peak youth organisations, OYAF and schools	DECCD, schools, OYAF, YNOT, youth organisations	• establish a committee to develop protocol so youth and community organisations can access students at school with issues, information and resources

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ISSUE: ACCESS TO SERVICE PROVISION, INFORMATION & SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
After-hours service (either voluntary or employed)	Venue, telephones, car, funding, mobile phone, computer, furniture	Volunteers or employees or youth organisations	• run service after-hours, organise rosters, provide telephone counselling after-hours, know where available accommodation is, act as a referral point, be able to pick young people up (where necessary)—if program was volunteers then a mobile phone with resource package which included all the above information could be run out of people's homes and a venue would not be necessary; just an umbrella organisation
		Local council or DCHS	• provide a venue, some funding, ongoing training and support
		Welfare agencies	• furniture, desks, chairs, beds etc
Social Science projects for young students to find out what resources and services are available to them	Co-operation between school and youth sector	Schools	• develop curriculum for Year 8–9 students that involves contact with youth sector and finding out what resources are available
		Youth and community organisations	• provide students with current information about services and issues
A resource information bag for Years 8–9 students	Funding, information, someone to correlate information, co-operation between schools and youth organisations	Youth and community organisations	• provide current information in pamphlet format
		DECCD	• correlate information into bags and provide to Year 8–9 students—bags should include information about crisis accommodation, health issues, employment issues and income
Information about issues impacting on young people to be located in public spaces and businesses, bus stops and public toilets	Co-operation between small businesses and youth organisations	Small businesses, i.e. shops, milk bars, take-aways, anywhere young people are likely to frequent and spend money	• allow resources to be visible in these businesses—could be a table with emergency services or information in window, or pamphlet stand
		MTT	• put crisis information in bus stops
		Youth and community organisations	• provide information on issues affecting young people to the resource location and keep information up-to-date
		Young people	• access information from local businesses

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ISSUE: ACCESS TO SERVICE PROVISION, INFORMATION & SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Statewide codes of conduct regarding confidentiality and working with young people	United agreement as to code, co-ordination, enforcement and grievance processes—co-operation and participation of youth and community organisations	State peak body	• co-ordinate process, form reference group who would develop code and guidelines for enforcement and grievance procedures for breach of code
		Unions	• provide guidance on management committee
		Youth organisations, OYAF	• provide guidance on management committee
		Young people	• provide guidance on management committee
Greater communication and co-operation between parent groups in schools and youth organisations	Co-operation between Parents and friends organisations and youth organisations.	Youth organisations	• access parents and friends organisations • develop relationships and create programs for young people around issues that impact on young people (to be done in schools)
		Parents and friends organisations	• participate in development of 'social issues based' education programs in schools with youth organisations
		Schools	• encourage liaison between parents and friends organisations and youth organisations
City Link program whereby a young people from rural and isolated areas can be linked to young people from regional and city centres	Co-ordination of program, young people, families	Young people and families	• provide accommodation for the young person in the home over school holidays and weekends and organise activities for young people
		Youth organisations	• co-ordinate program, develop database of willing families, do match-ups between rural young people and families, and city young people and families
		State Government	• start-up funding for program

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7. EDUCATION

Common Themes and Solutions

Transitional support for students moving from Grade 6 to Year 7 and from Year 10 to Year 11 that addressed social as well as the educational issues was a common solution discussed.

Due to the extra hours required for travelling to and from school by rural and isolated students, it was recommended that some time during school hours be allocated for doing homework.

Extending course options through TAFE, schools and other VET providers by offering these courses in one school so that students do not have to leave the area, and the provision of adult education courses at times young people can attend were other solutions raised.

The development of protocols between schools and youth and community organisations to facilitate the provision of information about health and other issues in schools was raised a number of times. The establishment of a youth services and resources 'expo' in schools each year was also a very popular idea.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Familiarisation to outside services	Information in schools; community organisations going into schools	Schools	• provide one or two days per term for a Youth Services and Resources Expo in schools (could be run on a District basis)
		Community organisations	• participate in services 'expo'
		Young people	• could organise it in schools
Industries in schools to speak with students about employment	Industries willing to participate, schools to organise	Industry bodies, schools	• provide one or two days per term for a Youth Services and Resources Expo in schools (could be run on a District basis)
Better transport arrangements	Training for school staff, financial resources	School staff	• address social issues as well as educational issues for Year 10 students moving into Year 11
		Young people	• better transition for young people from high school to college
Flexible study options	In school hours	Schools	• provide extra study time for students who live away from school, due to long distance travelling and length of the day
Course options	TAFE, schools, VET	TAFE, schools, VET	• should combine these courses in one school so young people don't have to leave the area

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8. To Be Informed, Heard and Resourced

Common Themes and Solutions

Many groups identified a need for young people to be informed, heard and to have an influence over both community decisions and decisions that directly impacted on them. The establishment of a state-wide youth council that included young people from around the state and from a wide variety of backgrounds was suggested often by groups as a way for young people to be heard. It was further suggested that the council could meet two or three times a year for a two-day forum. Relevant Ministers could be invited to attend part of the forums to be informed on the issues impacting on young people and to take advice on policy and programs for young people.

Other suggestions included local government youth councils that could advise on community issues and be involved in local area decision-making, and the representation of young people on management committees of organisations that impact on the lives of young people. Creating opportunities for young people to contribute to decisions about policy and programs that affect them, through more consultation, was another popular solution suggested.

The need to raise a more positive profile of young people through the use of the media was a strong recommendation. Other solutions that involved the media included a quarterly state-wide newsletter for rural young people, greater use of magazines currently accessed by young people, a youth page in local newspapers and the establishment of community radio for young people.

Possible Solutions	Resources/Support Required	Who Should Be Involved	What They Could Do
Raise a positive profile of young people in the community	Media support, coverage of positive youth activities Young people's involvement in public events	Young people	• become members of public committees and boards such as libraries, museums, local councils, youth and community organisations and management committees
		Media	• positive coverage of events involving young people • recognition of young people's community involvement
		Community organisations, local council, state government, industry, private sector, Industry Training Boards	• elect and support young people onto boards, committees and councils • ensure active membership of young people • value and encourage their contributions in a range of ways, including consultations
Local youth councils	Venue, organisational support	Local government, youth organisations, community members	• establish a local government council for young people to advise local community issues; local government should organise

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ISSUE: TO BE HEARD, INFORMED & RESOURCED (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
A statewide youth council	Young people from all over the State	Young people	• statewide body should advise the Minister two to three times per year—made up of young people from different areas, cultural groups, schools, organisations and the islands etc
	Minister for Youth Affairs	Minister	• should attend forum for a short period of time and take advice from young people
	Venue, funding to bring young people together	OYAF	• should administer and organise forums which should run for two days
Junior councils	Somewhere to meet, schools' support, transport, youth worker	Local council	• provide Council Chambers once every three months to meet informally and one other venue • meet on an informal, regular basis
		Parents, schools	• transport young people to and from venue • provide representatives for Junior Council
		Media	• advertise outcomes
		Young people	• should be on Council and raise issues—to find out what young people want
		Youth worker	• support young people
Quarterly statewide newsletter for rural young people	Photocopier, editor, computer, paper, location for equipment, contributors, mailing list, sponsorship, advertisement	Young people	• be part of the editorial and management teams • write articles, do mailout, gather information on issues that affect young people • design layout, gather sponsorship and advertisement
		YNOT	• co-ordinate project, gather sponsorship, encourage young people to participate, gather information on a national level for contribution to magazine • assist with articles, layout, distribution and mailout • locate computer, paper, printer etc
		Youth organisations	• provide articles on issues impacting on young people such as health and employment, resources, information on events, training and emergency services
		State Government	• agencies could provide information on services provided by government in rural and isolated areas • provide funding and information on youth specific events and services
		DECCD, schools	• contribute with current information and articles from students

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ISSUE: TO BE HEARD, INFORMED & RESOURCED (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
A greater use of Spectrum, in schools	Co-operation by DECCD—provision of one page dedicated to issues impacting on young people	DECCD, OYAF, young students	• as above
'Youth Page' in local newspapers	Co-operation of local newspapers	Local newspapers	• provide one whole page in local newspaper, every second edition
	Articles, computer, access to equipment	Youth organisations	• co-ordinate project, gather current information about young people and issues and provide training in newspaper layout
	Involvement of young people, youth organisations, training	Young people	• access training and be part of the editorial and management teams • write articles, do mailout, gather information on issues affecting young people • design layout, gather sponsorship and advertising
Community Radio for young people	Access to radio equipment or radio stations, youth worker, young people, training	Youth worker, youth organisations	• provide co-ordination, encourage involvement of young people • establish management committee and administer program • encourage participation of other organisations
	(Some old stations have closed but equipment is still available.)	YNOT	• have regular input to radio program • provide current information for transmission
		Old radio stations	• provide equipment
		Retired radio operators	• provide training to young people and assist in setting up and ongoing programming
		State Government	• provide funding and regular information about current programs run by government • be part of management committee
		Training/Industry Bodies	• provide regular information about training and employment options and issues
		Young people	• operate station, co-ordinate radio programming and be part of management committee • encourage participation of other key players and young people
		DECCD, schools	• contribute to information on issues affecting students • articles from students

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9. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Common Themes and Solutions

Solutions and strategies in relation to employment and training included ensuring access to employment and training information through:

- maintaining youth access centres or an equivalent;
- providing career advice in schools;
- providing information about training options via pamphlets;
- community Internet facilities;
- information days, free call services;
- community billboards;
- transport services; and
- access to public computers.

Many of the solutions recognised the need for services and training providers to come to rural and isolated areas or to provide free call numbers. The establishment of mobile outreach services to provide information and advise on career options, and the establishment of rural employment officers, were other common solutions suggested. Peer education was perceived as an effective means of transferring information. It was suggested that better networks need to be developed between training services and industry to ensure information is provided to rural areas.

There were a number of solutions and strategies suggested about the creation of job opportunities including the establishment of youth specific training options, for example through proposed youth cafés, and the establishment of sustainable rural specific industries such as a market garden. There were also recommendations about more job sharing and flexible hours options and recommendations to establish mentoring programs involving older people and business. In recognition of the lack of jobs available in Tasmania for young people it was recommended that young people be provided with positive alternatives to employment such as self sustainability.

Union visits to schools to provide information about wages, rights and occupational health and safety and to ensure that young people are not exploited in employment and training programs were perceived as essential in the current employment climate.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Youth access centres	Keep them open	DEETYA	• keep YACs open and operate them in rural areas
Youth specific training option	e.g. Green Corps	DEETYA	• provide opportunity (and organise it); same process as green core only in other industries
Career advice	In schools	Specially dedicated teacher	• advise young people of their options

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ISSUE: EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Mobile outreach services	Bus, information	Commonwealth Government	• provide information on employment options • advise on careers and access to training information
Move on employment rights	Unions	Unions	• visit schools, make sure youth wages are not being exploited • provide information on occupational health and safety
Travelling career expo	Information, bus, workers	Schools (DECCD), TAFE, DVET	• should work together to run a travelling career expo for young people in rural areas • should include training options, employment potential and information on competency standards
More job sharing	Unions, CES, co-operation/networking	Employers	• provide opportunity for flexible work hours and job sharing
Less pressure to get a job	Advertisement of positive alternatives to employed work such as volunteerism or an alternative self-sustaining lifestyle	Commonwealth Government	• provide funding for project and allow young people to receive income regardless of participation in education and training, particularly given there are not enough jobs
		Community/training organisations	• provide training or education in self-sustaining lifestyles or opportunities to volunteer and receive good references, training and possibly a job
Rural employment officers	Funding, location	Commonwealth Government	• funding from Commonwealth
More traineeships	Traineeships, co-operation from industries	Industry	• take on young people for training with job potential at the end of training
		State Government	• organise opportunities
		Commonwealth Government	• funding for subsidies
Industries specific to rural and isolated areas that are sustainable, e.g. medical herb farm	Farming facilities, funding, people with appropriate skills	CSIRO, University of Tasmania, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPIF), other relevant bodies	• work together to develop industries for young people in rural and isolated areas that will provide real jobs e.g. cut flower industry, medical herb farm and hemp farming • first market assessments to identify gaps in industries • establishment of public-owned farms for employment • development of financial plan

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ISSUE: EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Information about training options	Pamphlets, Internet facilities, information days, schools involvement, free call service, community billboards, transports, Rural Youth Network, DEETYA, better networks, computers	State Government	• provide information about training options in State government • run information days • provide Internet facilities and information on the Internet in rural areas • provide an Internet facility with all statewide training options and a contact list
		State Government/ DEETYA	• put out a regular magazine about up-to-date training options or a resource book with contacts (same as on Internet, only hard copy)
		DEETYA	• provide extra money to young people living in rural and isolated areas for non-local phone calls and long distance travel • quality control on training providers ensuring all training meets competency standards
		DEETYA/training industry	• provide a free call service for rural people about training options and income support (also on Internet) • make sure training meets competency standards in any given industry and provides a pathway to qualified training
		TAFE/training companies	• come into rural areas to talk about training options for rural young people • provide training (VET) through schools • provide information on training to young people through the rural youth magazine and schools
		Entire training industry	• could develop better networks between themselves and ensure that all the information about training is being provided to rural areas
		Local youth council	• provide a community billboard for training information
		Secondary schools	• provide VET training in schools and better work experience options • send information to distance education students • organise a career day with training providers • organise trips to city centres and training facilities
		Young people	• young people could be trained in talking with other young people and employed to talk about training options
		Rural Youth Network	• Provide information at their annual conference and in the Rural Youth Magazine

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ISSUE: EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Market Garden	Contact with the Hmong community for skills. Land, establishment funds, labour, equipment for farming.	DPIF	• provide guidance, funding and land
		Youth organisations	• co-ordinate program, get land, provide training to young people, ongoing facilitation of property
		Hmong community	• be approached to provide skills in market gardening to young people
		Local government	• provide land, facilitate project or council employees with equipment
Community Internet centres with job vacancies	Computers	State Government	• provide funding, computers • co-ordinate project and update information on a daily basis
		Libraries, schools, colleges, neighbourhood houses	• computers for public use
		Industries	• provide job vacancies to project

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10. Promotion and Development

Common Themes and Solutions

Promotion and development of rural and isolated communities was perceived as being influenced by some of the other issues raised. Common solutions raised included employment initiatives that involved tourism and the development of local resources, festivals and beautification projects. It was felt that promotion and development of isolated areas encouraged and lifted a community's esteem as a whole and assisted in preventing young people from leaving the rural areas in search of a better existence.

Possible Solutions	Resources/Support Required	Who Should Be Involved	What They Could Do
Statewide youth festival that travels to the three regions	Venue, artists, writers, bands, funding, co-operation and co-ordination	Local council	• provide a good venue in each of the three regions
		Statewide committee of young people, youth workers, community organisations and members	• organise the event on an annual basis
		Schools, students	• provide their artwork, bands, anything they want to sell, dancers, DJs
		Craft and self-employed	• sell their goods and at the event
		Local council	• permits and assistance
Industries specific to rural and isolated areas that are sustainable, e.g. medical herb farm	Farming facilities, funding, people with appropriate skills	CSIRO, University of Tasmania, DPIF, other relevant bodies	• work together to develop industries for young people in rural and isolated areas that will provide real jobs; e.g. cut flower industry, medical herb farm and hemp farming • market assessments to identify gaps in industries • establishment of public-owned farms for employment • development of financial plan
Market Garden for tourism	Contact experts in horticulture for skills Land, establishment funds, labour, equipment for farming	DPIF	• provide guidance, funding and land
		Youth organisations	• co-ordinate program, get land, provide training to young people, ongoing facilitation of property
		Hmong community	• be approached to provide skills in market gardening to young people
		Local government	• provide land, facilitate project or council employees with equipment

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ISSUE: PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESOURCES/SUPPORT REQUIRED	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	WHAT THEY COULD DO
Community Internet centres	Computers	State Government	• provide funding, computers • co-ordinate project and update information on a daily basis
		Libraries, schools, colleges, neighbourhood houses	• computers for public use
		Industries	• provide job vacancies to project
Concessions to rural and isolated areas	Co-operation of transport industry	Transport industry	• create concessions for people travelling to and from rural and isolated areas
		State Government	• provide subsidy incentives for bus/transport industry
Train service	Trains and tracks	State Government	• re-establish and operate passenger train service throughout Tasmania, especially on weekends • organise a private provider or do it themselves
Underage 'Woodstock' event/festival	Bands (youth mostly) from schools, DJs, T-shirts, hats, jumpers, paddock, venue	State Government	• organise and provide funds
		Community organisations	• provide volunteers and have information stalls
		Businesses	• could sell food, drink, products
		Young people	• form a management committee to assist with organising, also make T-shirts, hats, jumpers and sell them
		Local council	• permits and venue
		Bands and entertainment	• play at event
		Youth worker, police, community	• ensure all is well, welcome to come and join in

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RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF SOLUTIONS SUGGESTED

Some of the solutions suggested through the forums would require an allocation of new funding by one or more of the three tiers of government if they are to be implemented. Some of the solutions however only require a review and reorganisation of current funding, resources or spending in rural areas. Two examples are the better use of currently unused buildings and facilities, and the development of a resource and equipment library where equipment is borrowed and shared, eliminating the need for organisations and small groups to seek funding for 'one-off' activities.

Other solutions require a review and redevelopment of existing infrastructure and support mechanisms. A review of current service and information co-ordination structures with a view to improving overall servicing would assist in this redevelopment. A review of communication, program and policy networks is also required to improve linkages and overall vision for geographical areas. These measures will allow a more effective identification of gaps and elimination of duplication. Greater communication and a willingness of all stakeholders to review current programs would also contribute to furthering the changes required and solutions suggested.

People power and the harnessing and co-ordination of this resource in rural and isolated areas was a recurring theme. 'In kind' services and sponsorship from service groups and industry was also mentioned as a key resource option.

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

OYAF sought feedback to ensure that future consultations could be improved where appropriate and that existing good practices are maintained. The consultation process was evaluated through proformas issued at the final three Solutions Forums, and through verbal feed back at the Issues Identification Workshops. Further to this participants were invited to provide feedback to OYAF over the telephone or in writing if they wanted to.

Nineteen survey forms were returned at the forums and the following comments were provided.

1. **Did you experience any difficulties in getting here today? (If yes you may wish to tell us what the difficulties were.)**

Of the respondents, none experienced difficulty in actually getting to the forum, however, two people found it difficult to find the actual venue.

Suggestions for change:

- future consultations maintain the current practice of reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses to young people attending OYAF consultations;
- future consultations provide clear instructions as to the location of the venue.

2. Do you have any suggestions about changes to the sessions you participated in?

Most respondents did not have any suggestions. However, three people said that they would have liked more time to further develop the solutions and one adult thought that a group specifically for young people to develop their own solutions would be beneficial.

Suggestions for change:

- more time be allocated to future consultation forums;
- where appropriate young people should have an opportunity to develop their own solutions in forums set up specifically for them.

3. Did you find your participation valuable/useful/interesting? Why or why not?

Respondents to this question all found the forums valuable, useful and interesting. Comments included:

- *It was good to work with young people to solve problems.*
- *I enjoyed working with older people who wanted to listen.*
- *It was good to hear that others in the community such as the police are interested in youth issues.*
- *The sessions were well organised and provided an ideal forum for youth to articulate concerns and work towards positive solutions with their community.*

Suggestions for change:

- similar processes are adopted where appropriate for future forums;
- all stakeholders have an opportunity to work together in the future.

4. Would you be prepared to participate in another consultation at some time in the future?

Most respondents said that they would participate in another consultation. There was however some concern raised by members of the youth sector regarding the amount of notification time provided for the Solutions Forums.

Suggestions for change:

- similar methods of contacting participants be used again, taking into account time and distance restraints;
- a minimum of two and a half weeks notice be given to potential participants in future consultations.

5. Any general suggestions?

There were no general suggestions provided regarding the process.

General

Throughout the process OYAF received positive feedback regarding the consultation process. Young people participating in the Issues Identification Workshops said on many occasions that they valued the opportunity to have a say and that there should be more forums to listen to young people's opinions.

Young people were interviewed by Triple J and ABC News during the Issues Identification Workshops. Responses to questions asked by the interviewer were positive. The young people said that they enjoyed the opportunity to meet with each other and discuss issues in common. They valued the opportunity to have a say, were looking forward to participating in the Solutions Forums and wanted more opportunities to voice their opinions. This point of view was also evident in the Solutions Forums. Further to this OYAF received around 14 phone calls from participants thanking us for conducting the forums and providing communities an opportunity to work together.

APPENDICES 1–3: What the Literature Tells Us

Appendix 1

1. ABOUT APPROACHES TO POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Approaches to policy and program development have generally been strongly influenced by research and literature about the processes of decision-making at a macro level, and models have been derived from this aimed at improving the quality of decisions (Ryan 1995, p. 65). The **rational** model of policy formulation has exerted strong influence on policy makers. It is based on the premise that all relevant factual material should be gathered, assigned appropriate weighting and then analysed in a logical way to advise which policy option is the rational solution. In real life, however, there are limits to this process and behaviours aimed at 'satisfying' often result in a level of performance which will meet reasonable expectations and is acceptable (Hogwood & Gunn 1994, p. 50).

Allison (1971, pp. 252–257) draws attention to the notion that the actors in policy processes will view and interpret a situation through different 'conceptual lenses'. A rational decision-making process, therefore, needs to be tempered by a consideration of the assumptions and value judgements that exist beneath many aspects of decision-making. Despite this, rational approaches to policy development are still common. In general they are prescriptive, centralist and technocratic.

An alternative approach to policy and program development known as **incrementalism** was identified by Lindblom (1979). In this approach policy objectives are less prescriptive, a pluralist notion of consensus seeking is used and policy evolves through relatively small adjustments. All input by interest groups is legitimate and good policy and program development through this process will secure agreement of interests involved (Ham & Hill 1993, p. 85).

It was decided by OYAF to use incrementalism as the basis for further policy and program development associated with this consultation. It was felt that input by all interest groups wherever possible would provide a more comprehensive view of the issues and a greater commitment by stakeholders to undertake further developmental work in the area.

Aims of the consultations were determined and significant stakeholders and interest groups were identified. A process and model for the identification of issues, solutions and future directions was developed and the identified stakeholders and interest groups were incorporated into the process. Previous research and similar projects were also sought to ensure a comprehensive analysis.

2. ABOUT THE ISSUES RAISED

(This information was extracted from earlier research conducted by OYAF, Tasmania and the Youth Bureau, Queensland on behalf of the Youth Taskforce of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs.)

The broad range of concerns identified by rural and isolated young people are essentially no different from those identified by urban young people but are magnified by geographic location. They include: transport problems; limited employment, education and training options; minimal recreation and leisure options; and lack of information about available services and entitlements (Barker & Milligan 1990).

Limited education, employment, training, recreation, leisure and transport options contribute to the ongoing outward migration of young people from rural and isolated communities to urban centres (Stoessiger 1980; Commonwealth Schools Commission 1988). For example, in the two years to December 1987, net out migration from Tasmania more than quadrupled. (Unpublished ABS Statistics in Barker & Milligan 1990). This movement contributes to urban homelessness, unemployment and emotional trauma for those young people who attempt to relocate and also leads to the formation of ageing rural and isolated communities (Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission 1989). The loss of young people to urban and regional centres creates a spiralling effect for communities which includes fewer resources and a loss of growth opportunities (Martinez-Brawley 1987).

Transport

Transport is a major concern for rural and isolated young people. Reliable, affordable transport is fundamental to accessing a wide range of services, including health, education, employment, training, social and recreational activities.

Those living in areas isolated from large urban centres have limited public transport options. Additionally, the cost of travelling is usually expensive because of the distances involved. Owning a car is only an option for those young people who are over the age of 18 with the necessary financial resources. The Senate Select Committee on Employment, Education and Training identified transport as "a major factor inhibiting the development of education in Australia" (Senate Standing Committee on Employment Education and Training 1991).

The Regional Development Strategy (1994), released by the National Taskforce on Regional Development addresses the process of making isolated communities more physically accessible and linked. However, the recommended centralisation of shipping, trains and aircraft services may further contribute to the isolation of these young people. No recommendations were made in relation to increased public transport.

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Employment, Education and Training

Low school retention figures, and high unemployment rates among rural and isolated young people are well documented (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1988; Barker & Milligan 1991). Rurality and isolation directly impact on these rates as there is limited opportunity for young people in those areas to undertake a wide range of educational and training options within their own communities. Isolated young people who do undertake further education and training beyond Year 10 are often subject to long-distance travelling on a daily basis, boarding out or study by correspondence. The additional costs and inconveniences associated with further education and training do not encourage young people to take up these options (Barker & Milligan 1990).

Recreation and Leisure

Youth services providers in rural areas have identified boredom and a lack of leisure and recreational activities as another concern (NYARS 1990). There are few informal recreational venues for young people in isolated areas. Some local branches of organisations such as Australian Rural Youth do provide a range of formal and informal activities for their members.

Often rural and isolated communities provide traditional competitive sporting activities, but not all young people are able to participate or are interested in these activities. Changes in leisure consumption have impacted more significantly on rural and isolated communities. Home-based recreation and leisure activities (videos/computers) are increasing while structured community-based opportunities (cinemas/camps/dances) are diminishing.

The lack of leisure and creative opportunities compounds the disadvantage and alienation of young people, especially those who are unemployed and not participating in training programs, and is perceived by workers with young people to contribute to self destructive and offending behaviours such as drinking, drug abuse and petty crime. The literature, consultations and research point to the need for recreation and leisure services for young people which give priority to unstructured social activities.

Availability of Community and Information Services

A 1989 survey conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries concluded that rural and isolated people believe they have the right to adequate welfare and human services and that rural life is suffering because of the inadequacies of service delivery (McKenzie 1989). Young people in those areas do not believe they receive good service delivery in their communities. Remote areas have less than half the range of general community services available in urban areas (Coleman 1987). Obtaining and disseminating information on services available to young people outside their immediate community in an appropriate manner is an ongoing challenge.

Isolated and rural young people are also isolated from the planning and decision-making processes that are used to develop services within their communities. A North Queensland survey found that the most pressing service needs expressed by young people are related to their inability to participate in and influence decisions that relate to the development, implementation and evaluation of service delivery and programs targeted at them (Cheers & Yip 1992).

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3. ABOUT GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE MODELS FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

(This information was extracted from earlier research conducted by OYAF, Tasmania and the Youth Bureau, Queensland on behalf of the Youth Taskforce of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs.)

The development of guidelines for models for service delivery must reflect sensitivity to and awareness of key issues and local community structures and services whilst meeting the imperatives of funding and management bodies.

It is noted that there is a lack of nationally identified and accepted measurable factors of success which relate specifically to programs developed for rural and isolated young people and of reliable data that highlights specific indicators of success.

Service provision for young people which meets the immediate and long-term needs of the community requires good planning and implementation. Planning processes for services to rural and isolated young people must recognise the following principles of good practice:

- young people's involvement in consultation and planning;
- promotion of co-ordination and consistency, while allowing flexibility;
- accountability;
- accessibility and cultural appropriateness;
- building credibility with service users and the rest of the community;
- providing for developmental planning based on a clear grasp of needs and service gaps; and
- recognition of the expertise available in the community and demonstration of willingness to be innovative.

The application of these principles ensures close, informed and structured liaison and negotiation with local community representatives, potential practitioners and young people themselves. Services should be planned and implemented only after comprehensive, direct and meaningful consultations have taken place between representatives of government departments and local people.

Attention also needs to be given to the range of people considered as 'representatives' of the local community. 'Community representatives' often reflect the sectional interests of particular groups within the community rather than the views of those to whom a service may be directed. Funding bodies and management committees in this field must ensure that they do not marginalise or ignore the views and perceptions of young people in the development of services. The service outcomes must also take into account the needs of the community as perceived by young people themselves. In short, a central and unavoidable principle in good practice for planning service provision for young people in rural and isolated communities is that of community consultation.

The following models were developed with the assistance of the Centre for Social and Welfare Research, James Cook University, based on information about programs in operation around Australia.

Any of the following models for working with young people in rural and isolated communities may be applied having regard for:

- the availability of existing infrastructure (e.g. transport and communication systems);
- its cultural appropriateness i.e. does it reflect community need?;
- demonstration of cultural sensitivity (through good practice and principles);
- accessing of community elders;
- recognition of cultural issues such as family formation/relations/lifestyle/mores/values;
- the importance of picking up community-inspired initiatives;
- recruitment of workers from the community and/or acceptable to the community;
- management structures designed by/composed of local members;
- full and comprehensive negotiation, consultation and participation;
- the integration of systems of evaluation; and
- fiscal and operational considerations.

Model 1: Integrated/Collocated/Multi-function Services

Aims and Objectives

This model provides a broad service approach through the integration and co-ordination of services which share a facility and resources from which various programs/strategies can be administered and delivered. The structure of this model allows a co-operative effort rather than a duplication of effort as each independent program/strategy meets very specific and different needs. This model reduces reliance on transport to services outside the local area. Ideally the range of collocated services is designed to overcome dependency on outside referrals and emphasises personal contact and interaction.

Effective Aspects

The diversity of services offered from the same location ensures support and guidance in a secure environment, maximises personal communication and integrates effort and resources for cost effectiveness. Programs implemented from this model are able to reflect an acute cultural awareness and sensitivity to the needs of rural and isolated indigenous young people.

Model 2: Community Initiatives/Community-owned/Community-based

Aims and Objectives

This model aims to develop proactive programs that involve young people and their communities and is designed to implement change within communities, whereby the processes and proposed solutions are owned by the specified community rather than imposed from outside. The community identifies and prioritises operations and is then responsible for developing a local plan of action which may include activities, workshops, community-based projects, and/or school-based projects. Co-ordination of projects is viewed as a partnership, where all community representatives and implicated organisations are involved from the start.

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Effective Aspects

Programs and strategies which are owned, planned and delivered from within the community are more likely to reflect and respond to immediate community needs. Programs that are sensitive to the need for commitment and co-operation at a community level are found to work well in indigenous communities.

Model 3: Peer Support/Mentor Programs

Aims and Objectives

This model utilises peer culture and mentor support to teach a wide variety of skills. It has been found that strong peer group pressure takes the place of extended family support. The idea is to take this outcome and implement it into a positive learning environment. Through the formation of a mentor support, or specific peer group program, this approach establishes certain behaviours as unacceptable, particularly anti-social behaviour.

Effective Aspects

The programs/strategies following this model have shown that links developed between mentors and young people have far reaching consequences and, by utilising existing patterns of social behaviour as a learning environment, prove to be an effective means of implementing services. Programs implemented from this model are shown to be effective in meeting the needs of rural and isolated indigenous young people.

Model 4: Information and Referral Services/1800 Free Call

Aims and Objectives

This model provides a central contact point that allows rural and isolated young people to access information and support in a range of areas appropriate to them. The program provides an effective and competent means of professional assistance which can utilise national referral data-bases to identify and designate other appropriate services and agencies. A wide range of geographical areas can be covered and reliance on transport reduced. The telephone service is best available as a toll free number to increase accessibility. This model can be operated in several ways including office-based information services, (using community organisations to provide the service) and computer-operated services (in a distant location) providing callers with contact details.

Effective Aspects

This model is effective as a central contact point that covers a multitude of regions and referral options at the same time.

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Model 5: Programs Managed and Directed by Young People/ Youth Councils

Aims and Objectives

This model aims to voice the views and opinions of rural and isolated young people through the provision of forums and/or a series of consultations. The objective of the model is to provide detailed feedback to the community, government, local council and/or any other interested organisations about the needs and concerns of young people living in their regions. Although the program primarily involves young people, it brings together a range of people and organisations, i.e. key service providers, youth workers, community workers, teachers, officers from government departments, parents and concerned members of the community. Through the consultations and forums, young people and their communities are able to focus co-operatively to develop strategies and propose solutions that address needs and issues which concern them.

Effective Aspects

The effectiveness of this approach is the ability to bring together views of young people living in rural and remote regions and to provide them with detailed feedback. This model advocates empowerment and rights for these young people.

Model 6: Youth Centre/Designated Youth Space

Aims and Objectives

This model involves a designated space/centre for young people to engage in activities that are meaningful to them. The structure entails a supported environment where activities or workshops can be planned and implemented, or a drop-in session/centre established and provides a positive approach to changing or developing skills and behaviours of young people.

Effective Aspects

The designated space/centre acts as a bridge between young people and their communities. It is through this controlled and supported environment that issues of concern can be readily and openly accessed. This model as a community-inspired initiative has been shown to respond to specific social and cultural needs of rural and isolated indigenous young people.

Model 7: Outreach Service/Outreach across a Cluster of Communities

Aims and Objectives

This model is most useful where services have minimal (if any) contact with young people in the district. Services provide advocacy and support in a diverse range of areas which affect young people. The approach is one of integration and co-ordination and a wide range of services can be offered including increasing access to information, training and employment, and mentor support. Effective links with other community services can be established as can the development of strategies to address local needs.

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Effective Aspects

The effectiveness of this approach is the ability to allow access to guidance, support and information where services usually have little contact with young people. The diversity of services that can be offered by outreach services has proven to be a cost-effective means of delivery and reduces the costs of travel for young people.

Model 8: Inter-sectoral/Joint Business Service

Aims and Objectives

The model is structured to integrate education, training and employment through the co-operation of intersecting services/organisations. The model includes the practical application of skills through interaction with local community industry. Experientially-based training is offered where employment opportunities are limited or in existing industries which are experiencing growth. The approach is structured with a high level of community and youth involvement.

Effective Aspects

Effective aspects of this program stem from students' ability to access education and training, 'within' their communities. Strategies following this model are working successfully in indigenous communities because community members are able to control the programs offered and target specific needs such as learning skills to manage their communities effectively. Programs and strategies implemented following this model have shown it is cost effective to integrate efforts and resources. This model is an effective approach that benefits not only the young people but also the community.

Model 9: Youth Development through Youth Culture/Arts

Aims and Objectives

This model is designed to enrich the cultural, social and recreational life of rural and isolated young people. It can provide a range of workshops and activities with a cultural or arts base. It supports the development and extension of curriculum programs, creating options to work co-operatively with the local community. The approach is particularly useful in communities that wish to raise awareness and understanding of youth culture.

Effective Aspects

This model has been effective in extending and enriching community arts resources and experiences for young people living in rural and remote regions. Programs implemented under this model have proven to be particularly proficient at meeting the needs of indigenous communities, but are useful in all communities that wish to raise the value, awareness and participation in cultural activity.

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Appendix 4

4. IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES SURVEY FOR GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

AGENCY NAME: _____

CONTACT PERSON: _____

CONTACT ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT TELEPHONE: _____ CONTACT FACSIMILE: _____

What do you perceive from an Agency perspective to be the major issues impacting on young people living in rural and isolated areas?

_____

How is your agency currently addressing these issues?

_____

Does your Agency conduct any programs generally in rural and isolated areas? Yes ☐ No ☐

If 'yes', could you please provide details.

_____

What issues would your Agency like more information/clarification on?

_____

Has your Agency ever carried out research in this area before? Yes ☐ No ☐

If 'yes', could you please provide details.

_____

Does your Agency have any specific policies pertaining to young people living in rural and isolated areas?

If 'yes', could you please provide details. Yes ☐ No ☐

_____

_____

Any further comments/contributions.

_____

_____

I would like further involvement in the consultations. Yes ☐ No ☐

Please return by post or fax to:

Amanda Watkinson
Office of Youth Affairs and Family
GPO Box 169b
HOBART TAS 7001
(Facsimile: 6234 7784)

5. GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO THE MAJOR ISSUES IMPACTING ON YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL AND ISOLATED AREAS

MAJOR ISSUES	BARRIERS
Transport	- out of hours services to city - accessible public transport restricting services to city - road standards (footpaths/sealed roads) - cost of travel - time to travel - school services
Employment	- opportunities
Education	- lesser educational expectation from rural and isolated youth - retention beyond compulsory years of schooling - access to post compulsory schooling - obtaining information on options - access to vocational training - opportunities
Services	- access - closure of services - participation - lack of sports facilities - lack of cultural facilities - lack of entertainment facilities - provision of immediate response to crisis and violence
Extra-curricular	- lack of entertainment, recreation and leisure activities
Social	- interaction between communities (especially migrants)
Accommodation	- away from home - reluctance to leave family
Information	- access to latest information and resources - confidentiality in small communities
Drugs/Alcohol	- abuse of - leading to crime and violence
Money	- funding

6. NON-GOVERNMENT AGENCIES' RESPONSES TO THE MAJOR ISSUES IMPACTING ON YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL AND ISOLATED AREAS

MAJOR ISSUES	BARRIERS
Transport	- access to - inadequate
Employment	- opportunities - lack of employment and training facilities - less diversity
Education	- no higher education opportunities (beyond grade 10) - access to safe sex education - lack of pre-vocational courses
Services	- lack of trained or any youth recreation workers - access to services - support services for youth - lack of emergency services & poor response - knowledge of services available from Government - planning focus
Extra-curricular	- perception of city young people having more things to do - lack of opportunity to participate in full range of youth activities - lack of leisure activities
Social	- infrastructure lacking - lack of social opportunities - loneliness - boredom - low self-esteem and narrow expectations for themselves and their future - lack of foreseeable future - participation
Accommodation	- cost of leaving home to study at university/tertiary - less assistance than ever
Information	- non-judgmental and accurate - access to resources
Drugs/Alcohol	- abuse of
Money	- lack of to provide services in rural areas - generic funding programs
Suicide	- incidence of
Political Support	- little or no political support
Fashion	- lack of accessibility to fashion

7. SURVEY ON ISSUES IMPACTING ON YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL AND ISOLATED AREAS

This survey is an opportunity for you to have a say.

Name (Optional): ..... **Age**: ..... **Postcode**: .....

What are the good things about where you live?

What are the bad things about where you live?

What are the issues impacting on young people in your area?

What could be done to fix or change the situation?

What could government provide to change the situation?

What would you like more of in your area?

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